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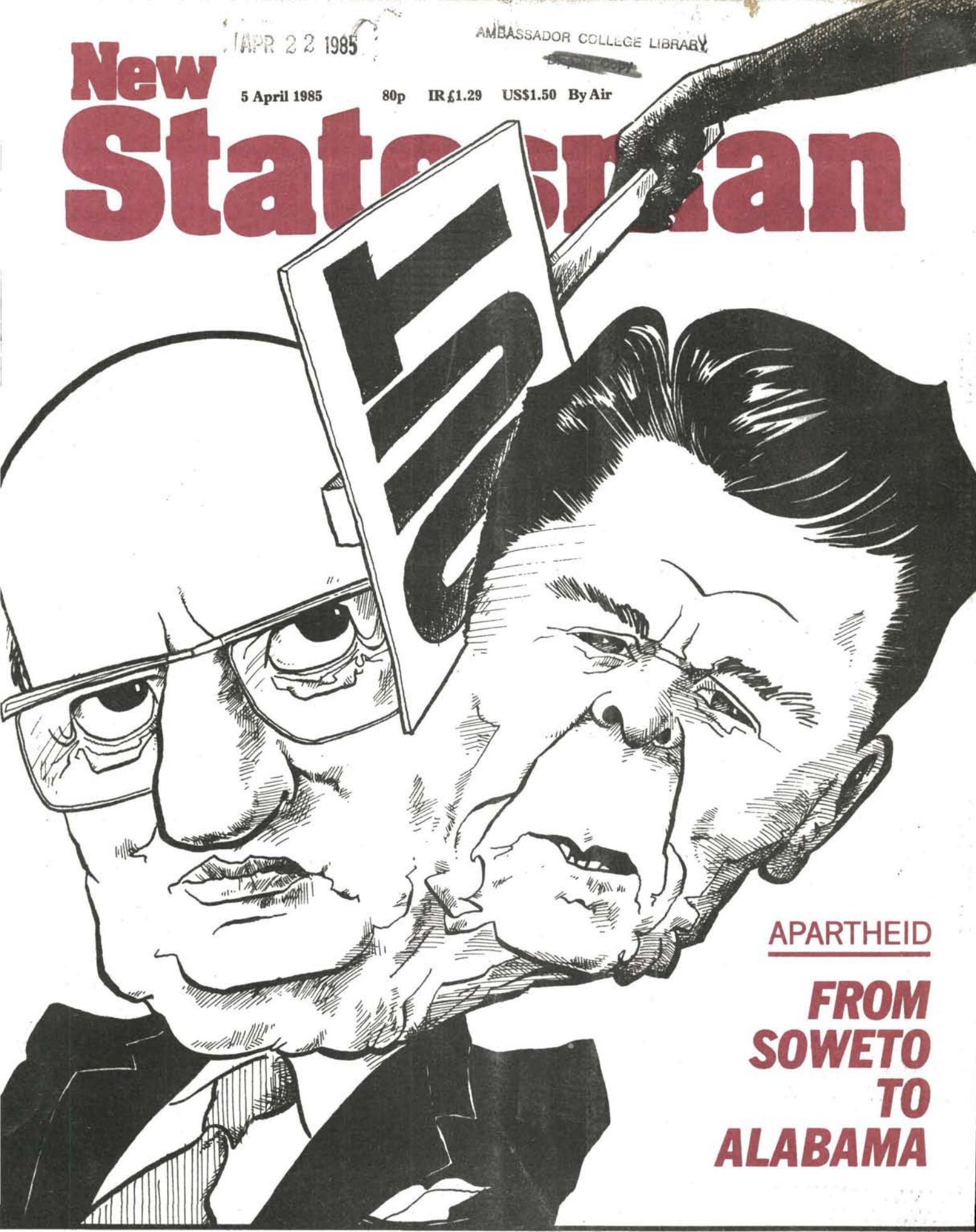

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New Statesman

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New Statesman

Vol 109 No 2820 5 April 1985

Not a black and white issue

AS FEAR of Labour's 'hard Left' recedes and distress at the collapse of large parts of Britain into mass poverty, dereliction and hopelessness takes grip, Labour looks more and more like an alternative government. Or, at least, an alternative political leadership, meaning that socialist values about economic justice, civil rights and cultural freedoms become the aspirations of the majority rather than the protests of the committed few.

But before Labour is ready to be an effective and credible government it has to carry through two bold programmes of self-reform. The first is to come up with a coherent programme of policies for economic regeneration and democratic rights which can be realistically implemented. The second is to reform the party itself, whose form and role are largely unrelated to the needs of the electors for effective political representation. This is less a question of constitutional blueprints and reform, more the urgent need for the Labour Party to *campaign* for its politics and values in the electorate at large — and discuss them amongst its own members, who can be as remote from political life as the uncommitted voter.

The immediate problem facing the Labour Party leadership is what to do about Black Sections. Its problem is that while there could be a consensus about the urgent need to encourage full representation for both black people and clear anti-racist policies, there is no consensus that setting up Black Sections, with constitutional rights at constituency, regional and national levels of the party, is the best way to ensure that representation. Such a proposal was defeated at last year's conference and would be likely to fail again this year.

The 'guarded welcome' which the working party chaired by Jo Richardson is expected to offer in its report to this autumn's conference will probably go no further than agreeing that where a substantial number of party members want to set up a local Black Section, with rights of representation at the General Committee — the constituency authority which, amongst other things, selects Labour candidates — they can go ahead. This might take some steam out of the pressure. But it will not solve the long-term problem of what sort of party Labour should be if it is to provide both an effective government and an effective means of political representation for people at the grass roots.

This is why the issue of Black representation should not be considered in isolation. Labour has moved a long way from its origins as a parliamentary committee for trade unions. More and more political demands have been put forward in the last 15 years which cannot be incorporated into trade unionism. Largely they are demands that are made either of the State — for reformed welfare provision, an accountable police force, or anti-discrimination laws; or of other social groups — for an end to discriminatory behaviour by, for instance, white people, or men, or heterosexuals.

Labour is therefore torn between making special provision for representing these newer political demands and being a national party that can express a unified political will for socialism. While some people may oppose Black Sections for racist reasons, or a refusal to recognise how serious a problem racism is, others oppose them for fear that Labour will fragment into a loose

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coalition of competing constituencies based on the differing social categories of race and sex and age, as well as class.

Even if the Labour Party were to rewrite its constitution from scratch it is unlikely that it could produce a coherent organic whole that would embody all these conflicting demands. But there are two medium term constitutional reforms it can go for. The first would be simply to accept the right of Black Sections to exist. It is the experience of all oppressed groups that the confidence and freedom to speak of their oppression is developed through excluding outsiders — while that experience is developed into collective political action. As a short-term measure, Labour's national leadership should therefore also support the right of Black Sections to representation on the General Committee of Constituency Labour Parties.

This will, on its own, create new political problems. Not all people whom the Left defines as 'black' regard themselves as black, socially or politically. Where the alliance between the Asian and Afro-Caribbean communities is fragile, pressure for Black Sections may split it altogether.

In this sense, black people are not analagous to women and to go for Black Section seats on the National Executive Committee would be, at the least, precipitous. Especially given the highly unsatisfactory nature of electing women to the women's seats. To go one step further and propose the NEC be made up of members chosen by, say, a women's conference, a black conference, a youth conference, a trade union conference, would destroy what little cohesion the Labour Party has.

The reforms should therefore be restricted to local level and accompanying any campaign for Black representation in the party there should also be a reform of the constitution of constituency Labour Parties. While General Committees, with Black Section representation, should retain the right to draw up short-lists for the selection of Labour candidates the final choice of the person who is to be the MP or Labour candidate for a constituency should be open to all Labour Party members through a secret ballot held at a general selection meeting. Trade unions would lose their block vote in the final section; but as this union-party link is often politically moribund, a campaign for trade unionists to be individual members might help revitalise the working-class composition of the Labour Party.

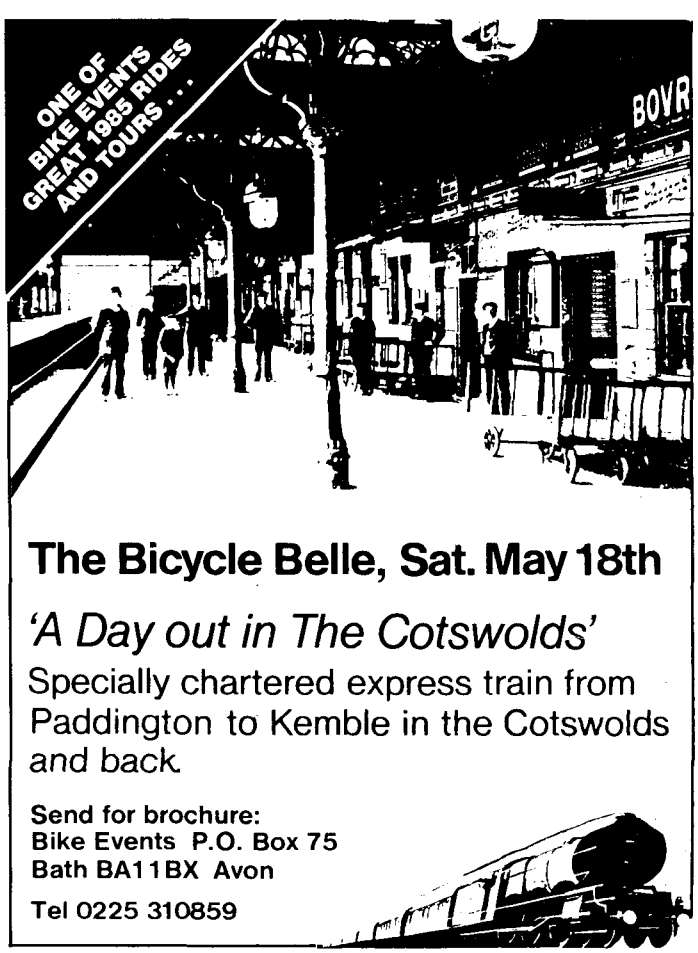
Meanwhile, the NEC should not be heavy-handed in its response to those few CLPs which are planning to break the rules and give Black Sections rights of representation. This is as much a matter of style as of constitutional rulings. The NEC is charged with upholding the party's constitution and it can hardly ignore that responsibility if the Left flouts the rules and be expected to enforce them, if, for instance, a CLP dominated by the Right chooses to ignore the rules of reselection. Rather than the Labour Party yet again becoming entirely absorbed by constitutional change, it should invest its energy in revitalising the flaccid political life of local parties and developing their functions as campaigning and educative organisations rather than mere adjuncts to the machinery of local and national government. □

Mad and bad women

IT IS DIFFICULT to select any one part of Britain's notoriously anachronistic and overcrowded prison system as being notably worse than all the rest; but in any competition, Holloway prison's 'C1' psychiatric unit would be a keen contender. Housed in an oppressive, foul-smelling underground bunker, this 46 bed-unit can only serve a punitive function. According to a recent report by two Holloway psychologists, the unit is used as a medical assessment centre for prisoners on remand. Almost three quarters of the waiting women were diagnosed as mentally ill. They are kept 'controllable' through the heavy use of psychotropic drugs. Although there are no figures for the drug use in C1, in 1983 more than 365 (one a day) doses of psychotropic medicine per year for every prisoner in Holloway were administered, far higher than for any male prison. It would seem safe to assume that the C1 inmates routinely receive more than this.

The rumoured decision by the Home Office 'internal inquiry' to close down C1 thus seems a good thing. A report by NCCL and MIND on their visit to the unit earlier this year speaks of the inmates' 'lack of motivation and occupation and an overwhelming feeling of despair. Frequently . . . shouts and cries came from women in their cells without any obvious immediate reaction from the staff.' Women were left in their cells 23 hours a day, though the newly re-opened education block was significantly underused.

But the recent Home Office record gives no reason to hope that they have more humane plans for the women in mind. C1 was opened in 1977 during the era when many prisoners were judged 'mad not bad'. This was especially true of women, whose violence is most often turned upon themselves in acts of self-mutilation. That era is over, replace by a uniform cry from government, Conservative Party and, increasingly, the Home Office that all dissident acts are 'bad' and must be punished accordingly. Even though the different male and female involvement in crime is one of the most remarkable sexual differences — in 1983 about 43,000 men received prison sentences compared with under 1,500 women — the view now seems to be that women's crime is not significantly different from men's. They should therefore be subject to the same regimes of less therapeutic and educative care, and more overt control. If it doesn't work for men, it certainly won't work for women, who do not even have available to them an equivalent of Grendon Underwood, the liberal psychiatric prison for men. With C1 closed, not reformed, the destiny of disturbed women prisoners would seem to be Broadmoor or Rampton . . . Britain's treatment of the disturbed is becoming increasingly callous. □



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LOW-KEY SORTIE TO UK ABOUT 'BIGEYE' BOMB

PRESIDENT REAGAN'S Review Commission on Chemical Warfare has made a clandestine whistle-stop tour of European capitals. On Friday they were in *London*. PATRICK FORBES reports on the significance that their visit, which has so far gone unreported, could hold for a US administration intent on forcing a massive binary nerve gas weapons programme through Congress

THE FOREIGN OFFICE are characteristically tight lipped, and misleading, about the commission: 'They were in Whitehall talking to senior Ministry of Defence and Foreign Office officials about chemical weapons'. But they talked to leading *scientists* too.

The American Embassy, equally characteristically, is slightly more forthcoming. It confirms that four of the commission's nine members — Ambassador Stoessel, Congressman Erlenbourn, and Messrs Bakes and Kester, a lawyer and an airline executive respectively — were here seeing both officials and British scientists. Among the latter was Julian Perry Robinson, one of Europe's experts on chemical weapons.

Discussion centred on the 'threat' posed by the USSR's stock of nerve gas, and the retaliatory 'adequacy' of the current US stockpile. Reagan wants to spend $150 million in fiscal 1986 on two binary weapons — 155mm artillery shells, and the much larger 'Bigeye' bomb, which has a 'deep strike' capacity.

Each weapon contains two relatively harmless agents (hence 'binary') which mix in flight to form a nerve gas (many times more deadly than mustard gas) which kills by disrupting the nervous system within minutes.

Critics of Reagan's programme (other than moral objectors) claim that full implementation would cost $6-15 billion, not the President's $150 million estimate for this year alone; and that the US already has a considerable stockpile of the 155mm shells. In addition it is asked why, with its nuclear armoury, the US needs a chemical weapon like 'Bigeye' with deep strike capacity. ('Bigeye' is reportedly still fraught with technical difficulties, bombs even blowing up in laboratories.)

An unpopular commission

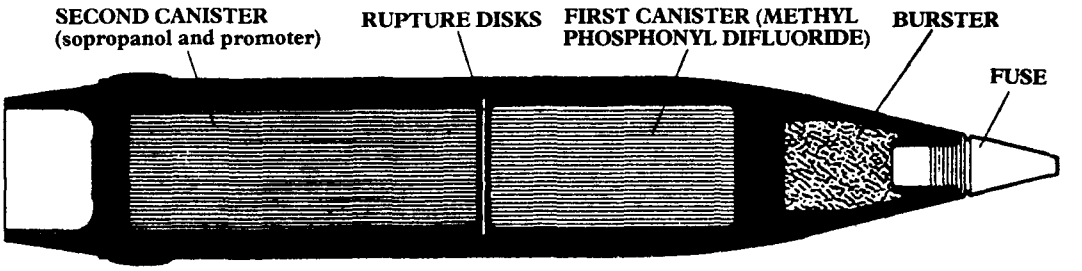
Many of those approached in the US to serve on the commission that passed through last week refused, on the grounds that objections won't be taken seriously, and that accordingly they were being asked to connive in a sham. The Administration's insistence that members should have taken no prior public stance on the issue means that some — Stoessel for one, also Bakes and Brzezinski — possess only a limited knowledge of the subject. Yet the criterion was overlooked in the cases of General Haig, and Congressmen Conable and Erlenbourn, who have all at some time taken a stand in favour of chemical weapons.

The commission have to make their report surprisingly quickly. They only started taking evidence in mid-March, and have to report by 15 April. This is only a week before the Senate armed services committee starts deliberations on which bits of the draft military budget go before the Senate.

There are fears that any expressions of European enthusiasm could be used to push the programme through a divided Congress and justify siting in Europe. After three years obstruction, this year the Senate is fairly evenly split. And the MX debate demonstrated that Senators may be tempted to see a vote for chemical weapons as giving the administration a 'bargaining chip' in any arms-limitation negotiations.

The need for binary weapons to be stationed in Europe has been exercising the special Cabinet committee (whose existence was revealed in *NS* 11 January) in recent months. It's hoped that when British officials met the US delegation they gave no support to the views of those British generals whom *The Times* last autumn reported as pressing for the creation of our very own stockpile. ●

155mm Binary cartridge shell



Row in BUAV

LAST SUNDAY 31 March, following the recent Serious Crimes Squad raid (*NS* 29 March) on the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection (BUAV), three of the more hardline BUAV officials were sacked for 'behaving in a manner contrary to the interests of the BUAV'. The suspicion must be that the three — Margaret Manzoni, Kim Stallward, and Paddy Broughton — have been penalised for the police's unwelcome attentions.

They counter that the meeting wasn't held in accordance with BUAV rules. The three are sending out a circular to all BUAV activists calling for an extraordinary general meeting. ●

Raw echoes of the Jimmy Baigrie case

THE INQUEST on Jimmy Baigrie, the Earls Court gunman, formally opened this Tuesday, but was expected to be adjourned to a later date. Last week (21 March) another inquest was held on a siege that went wrong and ended in suicide.

Southwark coroner Arthur Davies sitting with a jury heard the case of a Mr Baldessari who had been wanted by the police in connection with a series of armed robberies, and had been traced to a flat in South London.

The police had telephoned him at 9am one morning to tell him that the flat was surrounded by armed police, and thus began a siege that lasted over 48 hours, ending when Baldassari shot himself dead. Contact was maintained by telephone and a trained police 'negotiator' was used to try and persuade Baldessari to give himself up.

At the inquest only one non-official witness was called, one of Baldessari's sons, and he told the court and jury that the family had felt rather left out of the negotiations with his father in the effort to make him give himself up. The coroner didn't explore this development but rather quashed it hurriedly and moved on. Since Southwark coroner's court lacks even the basic requirement of a room to which the jury may retire, they huddled on their benches for about two minutes before bringing in a verdict of suicide.

Within 12 hours of that verdict Baigrie was dead too. Less than 24 hours after the officer in charge had said he was 'prepared to wait indefinitely', the police suddenly closed in on the van in which Baigrie had taken refuge and fired gas canisters into it. Almost immediately, in response to this, Baigrie shot himself dead.

Angry bystanders

Local residents were angry about the unexplained change of police tactics. They felt that either the police should have tried using gas straight away or kept to their original promise to sit the siege out.

In neither case were any hostages involved, not were any other bystanders or neighbours in danger. The police, therefore, had time on their side to develop successful strategies of psychological support and persuasion. Yet both sieges ended in suicide, and with criticisms from families and local residents.

In a letter to the *Guardian* published 28 March a resident of Philbeach Gardens criticised the huge armed police presence 'sufficient to intimidate an army' and the inhumanity of the police approach to Baigrie. 'I saw little to suggest that the police are best qualified to conduct such operations: most of them were primarily concerned for the safety of their own skins'.

In the midst of a current spate of 'sieges', some rather more serious than others, some urgent re-thinking of police tactics is needed if there aren't to be more unnecessary deaths as a result of badly managed police tactics.

Melissa Benn and Ken Worpole

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Black sections 'summit' on 14 April in Brixton

THE ROW over the constitutionality of black sections in constituency Labour parties (CLPs) moves to Brixton on 14 April when representatives of some 30 black sections from round the country are meeting to counter the Labour National Executive Committee (NEC)'s efforts to clip their wings.

The 'summit' will confront last week's decision by the NEC to impose a loyalty test in CLPs where delegates from the sections are already being allowed, in defiance of rules, to vote at Parliamentary candidate selection proceedings.

Despite the conference ruling, the number of black sections in CLPs has increased to 30. In London alone eight CLPs are considering allowing black section delegates to their selection meetings. Last month (11 March) Labour national agent David Hughes wrote to all 82 Greater London CLPs expressly forbidding this.

Divisions on high

But support is appearing too. Labour's general secretary-elect, Larry Whitty, has spoken in favour of the principle of black sections. And Labour's working party on black involvement is expected to recommend setting up of black sections within CLPs in some form — though is unlikely to recommend that blacks should be formally represented at a regional or national level.

The black sections national committee (BSNC) is considered to have been extremely clever tactically in linking the issue of black sections with that of representation of blacks

John Richards

National vice-chair — Marc Wadsworth

in Parliament, and therefore with the selection of Parliamentary candidates. It's the linkage of black sections with this issue which has brought about the recovery of the campaign for black sections since its embarrassing defeat at 1984 conference. The campaign for greater representation of blacks in Parliament is extremely popular in the community.

Marc Wadsworth, vice chair of BSNC, says briskly: 'Black sections will be accepted in the Labour party because it's what black activists want'. Many see it as the black community's ticket to seats in the House of Commons.

Arlen Harris

Bawling in Jenkin's ear

A CLOUD no bigger than a man's hand hangs over next Tuesday's scheduled official opening of the London Lesbian & Gay Centre by GLC personalities Andy Harris (former chair of the grants committee) and Valerie Wise (chair of the women's committee).

But that hand is Environment Minister Patrick Jenkin's, and it could swat the three-year £750,000 project out of existence at the very instant of completion (NS 15 March) if he and his officials don't act fast and with the absence of 'discrimination' which is promised to all enquirers by the DoE press office.

£130,000 of GLC funding, without which there will be no wages for the 11 Centre workers (who are aided by 100 volunteers), falls into 'Section 137' money which Jenkin took power to approve or reject in GLC financial year 1985-6. On Friday all 11 workers got their redundancy notices, as they legally must, for lack of any consents from Jenkin's office by 31 March.

A capacity to refrain from party-political discrimination against lesbians and gays, despite Tory conduct elsewhere (including in its party political broadcasts), has been exhibited by Jenkin in recent weeks in approving GLC fundings below £15,000, which included grants to openly gay organisations.

But though 52 out of 83 GLC funding proposals above the £15,000 mark got consents from the DoE by the last week in March (the 'entire bundle' — DoE press office phrase — having been delivered on 18 March) the London Lesbian & Gay Centre's stayed in the pending tray with requests for 'more information'.

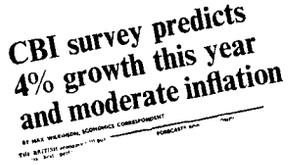
It's hard for those who have brought the Centre into being as the most comprehensive of its kind in the world — with purpose-build facilities for the disabled which have roused the vocal admiration of local magistrates — to suppress fears that Jenkin and/or DoE officials are being tempted after all by the applause that a 'no' would arouse in the Tory right and right-wing media.

Andrew Lumsden

MISCELLANY

April follies

First prize in Miscellany's April Fool competition must go to the *Financial Times* — the soberer the authority, the better the joke — for its 1 April front page lead story this Monday: 'CBI survey predicts 4% growth this year and moderate inflation.' Congratulations to economics correspondent Max Wilkinson and all the other journalists on the *FT* who clearly put in a lot of work to produce a very authentic piece,


CBI survey predicts 4% growth this year and moderate inflation

complete with a table full of figures and several subsidiary jokes ('the London Business School predicts that measures announced in the Budget will create about 375,000 jobs'). *The Times* and *Telegraph*, however, weren't even shortlisted and severe admonishments reminding their teams of the dangers of the obvious are deserved. *The Times* tried 'Thatcher calls for rates reform before the summer' on its front page, whereas the *Telegraph* went for '"Black bastard" not racial abuse says tribunal' opposite its famous leader column. Second prize is awarded to the *Morning Star* for its front page exhortation: '"Reconcile" plea by meeting of Communists,' along with some good supporting material. Also-rans were a *Mail* front page story about Transport and General Workers ballot-rigging, claiming the scandal had first been brought to the public's attention by Lord Chapple in his weekly *Mail* column, and a *Guardian* front page report that Edward Kennedy is thinking of running for President (again).

Virile dispute

Now for a lower tone. What's the difference between a condom and a cigarette? Answers on a post card

please to Philip Morris. They're suing 'leading' Swedish contraceptive manufacturer Nils Adamson, which has apparently been selling its wares in packaging that might be thought to look rather similar to Philip Morris cigarette packets. The Adamson director responsible for condom sales is reported as breathing that though he'd been somewhat dubious when his advertising agency suggested a form and design possibly reminiscent of cigarettes — cigarettes having a somewhat negative image, he feels, while condoms stood for something positive — he had agreed to the project. Philip Morris' advocate has countered by doubting that worthies such as, eg, the Christian Democrats, would describe condoms as positive (why not?) and doesn't want the good name of Marlboro mixed up with condoms, no matter how famous they are. The case, in Sweden, continues.

Missed trick

Friends of the late Lord Rosebery (d.1929), briefly Liberal Prime Minister in the 1890s, are complaining of how yet again his memory has been slighted by showbiz. Last week's Hawkesworth/Gambon *Oscar* trilogy (BBC 2) was praised for its third part — goal and exile — and damned for its 'pretty awful' first part (Julian Barnes in the *Observer*), where, says Barnes, we saw little but 'Oscar as hype and narcissism'. Why the suppression, as in the '60s Finch and Morley movies, of the *real* first part of the story of Wilde's destruction? The love affair — we are assured that contemporaries and later generations of the Queensberrys believed it to have been one — between Rosebery and Lord Alfred Douglas's eldest brother Francis. This seems to have prompted Francis's suicide at the age of 27 just months before the famous 'to Oscar Wilde posing as a somdomite' card was deposited at Wilde's club by the mad father of *two*, not one, gay sons. Queensberry had of course been persecuting Francis just as much as Alfred, Rosebery almost as much as Wilde. The Crown, according to one of its own Law Officers at the time, pursued Oscar so ferociously in the 1895 trials lest anyone suppose it was afraid to act because of the *other* rumours surrounding the PM and the lately-dead Francis. How very modern . . . how strange and interesting . . . and how absent yet again from the British screen.

Fast one, BNFL

British Nuclear Fuels plc has just announced its finest-ever cosmetic operation on behalf of people living near the notorious Sellafield nuclear complex in Cumbria (see NS 14 September 1984). The dear boys are spending a fleabite £600,000 on an eight-lane 400m running track to be part of a new sports centre at Hensingham, near Whitehaven. Said track is to be operated by Copeland borough council and is due to be in use by the end of the year. Mind you, Sellafield workers might be well advised to use it — at least that way they'll be in Sebastian Coe shape to run away from any radiation leaks.

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Peace Protests Roll Call (13)

Total arrested to date in UK and Eire: 6,814

Hull Women for Peace, Hull **13**
19.2.83. 20 women picketed an RAF Recruiting office and asked passers-by to sign a petition in solidarity with arrested Greenham women — 9 women later arrested after lying down across Prospect Street and stopping traffic and another woman and three men, including an NCCL observer, were arrested for not moving off when told to. The 13 were charged with obstruction and at a later court hearing 10 agreed to be bound over to 'keep the peace' for one year in forfeit of £200. The three juveniles were fined £25.

Salisbury Plain, West Down Plantation **1**
19.3.85. 'Blues' arrested and charged with trespass after going through the wire at West Down Plantation while tracking the cruise missile convoy out on its 13th military exercise since 8.3.84. She was detained by American security police who placed thick plastic hand restraints on her.

Rolls Royce & Associates, Raynesway, Derby **6**
21.7.84. 6 people climbed on to the roof of Rolls Royce & Associates in Derby, as a protest against the firm's connections with the nuclear industry. They were arrested, held in custody for two days and then charged with blemishing the peace under the Justices of the Peace Act 1361. At Derby magistrates on 9 Jan, five agreed to be bound over to keep the peace. The sixth, David Davenport, refused to be bound over and was sentenced to three months imprisonment at Leicester jail and was told he could not appeal against the sentence.

Coulport, Dumbartonshire, Scotland **5**
8.12.84. 5 peace protestors were arrested after lying down in front of a convoy carrying Polaris submarine warheads from Coulport to RAF Burghfield in Reading. The convoy was effectively halted by this action which took place in order to attract attention to the fact that a nuclear convoy regularly travels through suburban areas. No indication is given to the public of the convoy's load, nor the purpose of the 'special forces' escort. The route taken by the convoy also contravenes the declared 'Nuclear Free Zone' of Strathclyde. The five arrested protestors have all pleaded not guilty at Dumbartonshire Sheriffs Court and will appear at a second hearing in June.

Sculthorpe USAF Base, Norfolk **67**
10.3.85. 67 people arrested at the base after taking part in the 4th stage of the successful 'snowball' campaign. All 67 were charged with cr. damage. On 6 March, 7 protestors who took part in an earlier snowball action were fined £60 with £20 and £18.65 compensation each, those who were being charged for a second time were fined £100 instead of £60.

Chilwell USAF base, Nottingham
Jeremy Deacon was found guilty of cr. damage (crawling under the perimeter fence) and obstruction of a policeman (being on top of an MOD building). He was duly fined, with costs, £170 on 19.2.85. The court however, made an embarrassing mistake when they sent Jeremy a letter intended for Leicester Magistrates Court confirming the transfer of fine order. The section entitled 'Relevant Information' contained this description of Jeremy: 'Defendant is a member of CND and does his utmost to attract publicity. He will force the court into a situation of committing him for Non-Payment if he gets the chance'. Barbara Cohen of the NCCL said: 'We are greatly concerned that comment of this sort, which could prejudice a person's treatment by a court, should be transmitted in the guise of an official communication. We will be looking into possible action.'

Whitehall, MoD, London (15 Jan action — Martin Luther King's birthday)
At Bow Street Magistrates on 28 March 4 members of Catholic Peace Action and Sister Doreen Tobin from Pax Christi were found guilty of obstruction but given an absolute discharge by Bow Street Magistrates. it is believed that Sister Tobin is the first nun since the Reformation to have been a prisoner of conscience in Britain. One of the magistrates asked Sister Tobin for a copy of her statement for his daughter who is doing a project on Martin Luther King! Four others will be heard at Bow Street on 4 April.

On 27 March Di MacDonald was sentenced to 26 days in Holloway jail for non-payment of outstanding fine and for driving her car on to the Greenham USAF base. Cards, letters, reading material would be much appreciated — write to Di MacDonald, Holloway Prison, London N7.
The United Nations Council for Namibia (UNCN) has expressed support for a group of women activists currently facing jail sentences as a result of demonstrating against the illegal use of Namibian uranium by Britain. Nine of the 19 women arrested at Capenhurst Uranium Enrichment Plant last March were ordered to pay £550 compensation to BNFL but have instead paid the money to SWAPO, as an advance payment on the compensation BNFL may eventually be forced to pay a future independent Namibian government.

Please send new information to ***Janey Hulme*** *at the* New Statesman. *Further arrest details, for which we have no space here, will appear in later Roll Calls.*

Mark Salmon

AS EASTER NEARS . . .

POLLY WOOLLEY, who in *NS* 15 February sang a lament on this page for Molesworth's Rainbow Village, evicted by Heseltine on 6 February, has been enquiring after them as they move about derided by hostile residential areas.

Although evicted in mid-February, the Rainbow Village remained comparatively united, despite police harassment which seemed to intensify as time went on. The Village settled for a month at Graffham Water in Cambridgeshire before moving on to the disused Desborough Airfield in Northants.

From there one group of twelve vehicles returned to Molesworth on 10 March, remaining nine hours before police and contractors arrived to remove them. In the darkness and confusion a contractor crawling under a bus was injured. The bus's driver has been charged with grevious bodily harm (Section 20).

Six vehicles were impounded; a blockade on the A1 persuaded police to release them, but they proved to have been vandalised, although they were subsequently repaired by the police. Charges are pending. As I write this, Rainbow Village is on a lay-by on the A1 north of Alconbury, and in high spirits.

The remainder of the Village went south into Bedfordshire where they are now established on a lay-by near Bedford. Despite continued police harassment they're endeavouring to forge links with local environmental and peace groups.

Molesworth's geographical position places it between the different police forces — Northants, Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire. The clear lack of liaison between them should be giving some faint comfort to those of us concerned with the erosion of civil liberties occasioned by a National Police Force. In fact, the involvement of so many forces sometimes leads to almost federal behaviour. A peace protester may blockade in Cambridgeshire — but not three yards away in Northants. Rainbow Villagers find themselves escorted to county boundaries — but not beyond.

On the whole, Rainbow Village North and South is out (for the moment) but not down. ●

Council scoreboard

7 March

Sutton LBC	LIB GAIN (Con)
W Derbys DC	LIB GAIN (Con)
High Peak DC	SDP GAIN (Ind)
Welwyn Hatfield DC	Lab hold
Southend DC	Lib hold
Nuneaton & Bedworth DC	Con hold

14 March

Blaby DC	LIB GAIN (Ind)
Islwyn DC	Lab hold
Carmarthen DC	Ind hold
Hove DC	Con hold

21 March

Strathclyde Reg	LAB GAIN (Con)
Bexley LBC	2 LIB GAINS (Con)
Bromley LBC	LIB GAIN (Con)
Bradford MBC	LIB GAIN (Con)
E. Herts DC	LIB GAIN (Con)
Carmarthen DC	LIB GAIN (Ind)
Sefton MBC	Lab hold
Ealing LBC	Lab hold
Strathclyde Reg	Lab hold
Strathclyde Reg	Lab hold
Aberdeen DC	Lab hold
Erewash DC	Lab hold
Cumnock & Doon Valley DC	Lab hold
North Beds DC	Lib hold
North Wilts DC	Lib hold
Aberdeen DC	SDP hold
Bexley LBC	Con hold
Wychavon DC	Con hold
Tayside Reg	Con hold
Wyre Forest	Con hold
Erewash DC	Lab win*

28 March

Wigan MBC	LAB GAIN (Con)
North Herts DC	LIB GAIN (Con)
Rugby DC	LIB GAIN (Con)
Test Valley DC	SDP GAIN (Con)
North Herts DC	CON GAIN (Ind)
Northavon DC	Lab hold
Bassetlaw DC	Lab hold
Bromley LBC	Con hold
Winchester DC	Lib win*

*New seats

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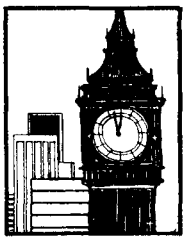

PETER KELLNER

Why Labour should be nice to the Liberals

LAST WEEKEND's decision by Scottish Liberals to oppose cruise missiles *and* the presence of US nuclear bases in Scotland could not have come at a more embarrassing time for the Liberal/SDP Alliance. Almost simultaneously, the Labour and Conservative parties have started to project the Alliance as a marriage on the rocks; the last thing David Steel or David Owen can have wanted is a televised demonstration of that fact.

Although the Alliance still trails in third place in the opinion polls, it remains a threat to both main parties. March's local council by-election results make the point only too clearly. For the first time since March 1983 (that politically peculiar month between the Liberals' victory at Bermondsey and the SDP's defeat at Darlington), the Alliance last month took a lead in votes cast. The distribution of votes in three-cornered contests was as follows:

Liberal/SDP	26,251	32.6%
Conservative	25,898	32.1%
Labour	24,049	29.9%
Others	4,314	5.4%

Before Steel or Owen jump up and down claiming a breakthrough and shouting yah-boo-sucks to the pollsters, a cautionary note must be entered. From time to time, our survey of local elections has found biases in the pattern of seats fought; sadly for us number-crunchers, councillors resign, die or retire in a pattern that does not always ensure that a representative sample of British electors get the chance to vote. And from the pattern of seats fought last month, there was a clear bias towards areas of Conservative and Alliance strength. My estimate of the national picture suggested by the March results is: Labour 35 per cent, Conservative 31, Alliance 31. The gains-and-losses table is as follows:

	Seats defended	Seats lost	Seats gained	Seats held now
Con	19	12	1	8
Lab	11	0	2	14*
Lib	3	0	11	15*
SDP	1	0	2	3
Others	5	4	0	1

**Includes new wards*

Altogether the Conservatives lost ten seats to the Alliance and two to Labour. What seems to be happening is that where the Alliance is weak, its vote seldom advances and Labour becomes the clear beneficiary of Tory unpopularity; but where the Alliance is the clear challenger, its vote soars.

London borough by-elections last month illustrate the point. Voting took place in six suburban wards. Five of them were Tory wards where the Alliance ran second last time. Three of these were captured by the Liberals and the other two held by the Tories but with sharply reduced majorities. Overall, the Tory share in these wards fell from 64 to 42 per cent, while the Liberals' share almost doubled from 23 to 44 per cent. Labour's share barely moved: 13 per cent last time, 14 per cent this time.

Yet in the sixth seat, in Ealing, Labour held a seat with its majority over the Tories rising from 233 to 1,140; and the Alliance vote halved. And in other parts of the country Labour also made substantial headway *where it was already the main anti-Conservative party.*

IT IS FAR from certain that this pattern would repeat itself at a general election, where electors are choosing a government rather than deciding how to cast the most effective anti-Tory vote; yet the potential for such variations leads to some intriguing calculations, and helps to explain some recent manoeuvres by the two main parties. There was Neil Kinnock on TV-am on Sunday saying all sorts of nice things about the Liberals and contrasting them favourably with the ratbags in the SDP; and there are the Tories using some of their free television time to slag off the Liberals and show what subversive creatures they are compared with the SDP.

Such tactics also explain why events such as the Scottish Liberals' vote on American bases has such potency. But what explains the particular tactics employed by Labour and the Conservatives towards the Alliance? It might be thought the answers are obvious: Labour can never forgive the SDP defectors, while most Tory MPs had Alliance MPs in second place at the last election, and so have a clear interest in rubbishing their enemy.

Both statements are true, but far from the full explanation. It is true that the Alliance came second in 265 Tory seats in 1983, while Labour came second in just 125. Those figures, however, are misleading as an indication of where the greatest threats to the Tories lie. For that two-to-one ratio of Alliance-Labour challengers is reversed if we consider Tory marginals:

Con lead in 1983	Conservative seats where Labour second	Liberal second	SDP second
0-14.9%	76	26	12
15% +	49	137	90

The political implications of these figures may be seen if we assume an election result next time where the Tories lost every seat where their majority is less than 15 per cent. (Five seats where Scottish or Welsh Nationalists came second also came into that category.) If we assume further that the seat is won by the party that came second last time, then the new House of Commons would look like this:

	Seats	Gains/ losses
Conservative	278	-119
Labour	285	+ 76
Liberal	43	+ 26
SDP	18	+ 12
Others	26	+ 5

Such a result would give the Alliance the balance of power; more specifically it would give the *Liberals* the balance of power, because they would dominate the Alliance contingent in the Commons. The imbalance in Alliance forces is likely, in fact, to be even more marked than that: five of the Tory marginals where the SDP ran second last time involved the defeat of a sitting defector-MP — four ex-Labour, one ex-Tory. A sixth, Crosby, is a normally safe Tory seat that Shirley Williams won in November 1981. A more realistic guesstimate is that Labour would win four of these seats and the Tories hold two; in which case there would be 43 Liberal MPs and just 12 from the SDP.

The more general point to flow from this analysis is that if the next election proves to be a close-run affair with Labour gaining 70 to 90 seats from the Tories, the critical factor that will determine who has the largest number of seats will be, specifically, the number of seats the *Liberals* win from the Conservatives. The separate SDP threat is negligible.

For the Tories, then, a key element in defending Mrs Thatcher's throne must be to persuade potential Alliance voters that while Dr Owen and his band may be social market knights in shining armour, the Liberals are an altogether shabbier lot who threaten to inflict brown rice and one-sided disarmament on an unsuspecting electorate.

Labour's interest in the fate of the Alliance is less direct. There are just ten seats where Labour is competing with the Alliance for possession (including the four now held by the Tories), and only two of these — Sheffield Hillsborough and Leeds West — where the opponent is Liberal. If Labour were confident of winning the next general election outright, it could ignore the Alliance altogether. However nobody in their right minds can regard that as a certainty.

So it is in Labour's interest to talk the Liberals up in the hope that they will capture enough Tory seats to pull Thatcher down and allow Labour, at the very least, to form a minority government. The message from the latest opinion polls and council by-elections is that if a general election were to be held this spring, that is exactly what would happen. □

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LOOKING FOR NEW FRIENDS

As unions in rate-capped councils prepare to meet in Sheffield on 13 April Edward Pilkington describes the history of conflict between unions and councils over 'Going Local'

ALTHOUGH THE metropolitan authorities have decided not to adopt an illegal stance on rate-capping, confrontation with central government could still lie ahead for the City and London Borough Councils. If it does, then those councillors involved will be looking for the solidarity and support of people beyond the Committed Left to pull them through their legal battle with Whitehall.

Nearly all of these Labour controlled rate-capped authorities are strongly committed to decentralising their services. 'Going Local' is not a new concept — it has resonances with the experiments in area management in the 1970s. Recently, however, it has been adopted by the Left of the Labour Party and has made its way into a number of local party manifestos.

Proponents of decentralisation say that it will make local government more efficient and accessible. Services will be moved out of the town hall into local area offices. This should allow, they say, for greater public accountability as power will be developed to area forums made up of representatives of the local community. They hope this will close the wide and growing gulf between local government and the people.

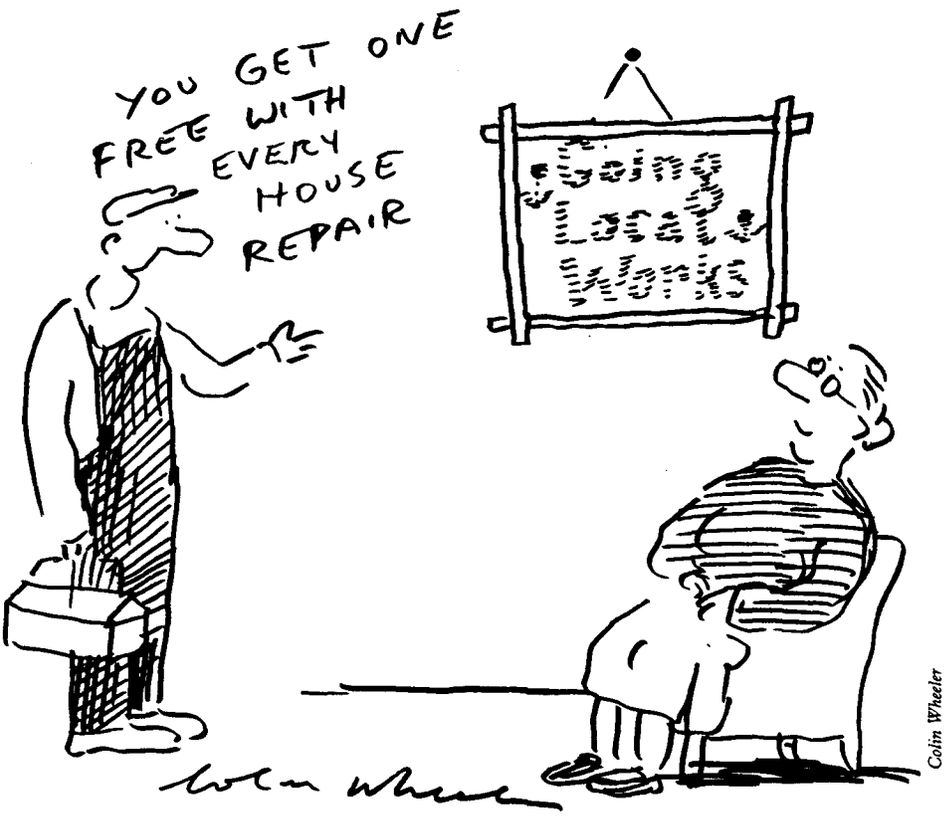
What they hope is that, by closing this gulf, local government, will become more popular and therefore more resilient to central government attacks. The fact that many rate-capped authorities are also committed to decentralisation is therefore no coincidence. The Labour Left hopes 'Going Local' will be a mechanism for getting public support behind the fight against cuts.

The 1982 Labour manifesto in Hackney made this link explicit:

> The Tory attacks on local councils have put local government in crisis. People have fought to preserve local schools and hospitals. But similar action in defence of councils has not happened. It is no good therefore for socialists to argue for 'more of the same'. We must combine the demand for no cuts with that of decentralising council activities and develop a new kind of relationship between the council and the people.

Has decentralisation, then, helped to cement the alliance between the Labour Party, unions and local people on which the fight against rate-capping depends? In certain instances the answer seems to be yes. One of the best examples is the local repairs system which both Walsall and Islington have successfully introduced.

Out of their old centralised, corrupt and woefully inefficient systems these councils have created a repairs service based around a number of mobile craft teams operating from local patches. A whole tier of middle-management has been by-passed and as a result the time taken to complete repairs has been slashed. In Walsall the demand for repairs has shot up by a reported 500 per cent and there has been a similar increase in the productivity of the Direct Labour Organisation of some 300 per cent, making it highly profitable.



Colin Wheeler

Here, decentralisation has helped to improve relations between manual workers and tenants. Seldom can this be said, however, of the white-collar unions: NALGO and NUPE officers. Nor has it done much to unite these unions and their employers — the radical Labour Left which came to power in many London boroughs and metropolitan authorities in 1982. For there is another striking coincidence about these Labour-controlled authorities: many of them have also been racked by some of the most bitter industrial disputes in local government this decade.

AGAIN, THIS is not coincidental. Many of these disputes have been directly or indirectly related to decentralisation. This is ironic because many of the decentralisers have emphasised the need to increase their links with the unions by bringing them into the *political* processes of the council. Decentralisation would therefore devolve power not only to the community but also to the unions. It would mean both users' and workers' control.

This idea of workers' control might go down well with continental syndicalists, but it has not been well received in Britain. It cuts across the traditional union procedure which is to wait for the politicians to formulate proposals and then to negotiate over them to ensure that they do not conflict with the interests of their members. Participation in the drawing up of political proposals is anathema to many unionists because they suspect that not only will they have limited rights to participate in drawing up proposals; they will also lose the right to negotiate over these proposals.

NALGO does not have a formal policy on decentralisation, leaving it to local branches to muddle through. Many branches, like Islington or Hackney, have rejected the offer to take part in formulating plans for decentralisation. At the start of decentralisation in Hackney, for example, NALGO said that it would not consider participating until the conditions of the decentralised services had been formally negotiated. It agreed, at the end of 1982, to put a 12-point proposal to the council outlining the direction those negotiations should take.

Adding to NALGO's suspicions is the fear that decentralisation will only mean do-it-

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yourself cuts unless more resources are made available. But how, they ask, can extra resources be released at a time of economic retrenchment and rate-capping? Whilst the Labour politicians argue that decentralisation is needed to mobilise the people behind the fight against rate-capping, NALGO has reversed this equation. Unless rate-capping is defeated how can decentralisation succeed?

NALGO's scepticism has forced the politicians to think through decentralisation in a more concrete way. But it has also placed the union in the traditional defensive role of reacting to proposals rather than putting forward proposals of its own. It is thus in danger of jeopardising the development of new forms of municipal socialism which at their heart depend on changed relationships between councillors, officers, workers and 'consumers'.

The changing composition of NALGO hasn't helped produce for it a clear role. It has been steadily moving away from its original *raison d'etre* as a chief officers' club, and now consciously aligns itself, both nationally and in many local branches, with lower-level officers. Consequently, it has begun to resist the creation of high-grade posts in order to open up job opportunities at the base.

This conflicts, however, with NALGO's traditional negotiating role which is to demand better pay for its members. A farcical situation has therefore developed in some boroughs whereby the union has argued in private against the creation of senior posts in a decentralised structure — but has then negotiated in public for the upgrading of the very same posts it had tried to block.

But if the employer must be held at arm's length in the 'members' interest', so too must the public, the 'consumers' who have no power over the officers and thus sometimes resort to verbal and physical violence. Some branches have resisted open-plan offices on the grounds of 'security', demanding that security screens remain in place between officers and the public. This may indeed be in the short-term interests of staff, but it does nothing in the long term to alleviate tensions between the public and council workers. On the contrary, it feeds public aggression and the need for security screens increases.

IF NALGO has perhaps been contradictory in its response to decentralisation, the same criticism could also be made about the politicians' response to the unions. Many of the 'new Left' councillors came from a community activist background and had little or no experience of traditional trade union functions and practices.

From their background, in which unions are castigated as forces of conservatism, Labour councillors have often been too quick to blame the unions for holding back decentralisation. NALGO decisions not to participate in the drawing up of decentralisation proposals are criticised by many councillors who have little experience of a worker/manager relationship in which negotiation is the customary form of that relationship. In Hackney, again, the 12-point programme for negotiations put forward by NALGO at the end of 1982 was virtually ignored by the Council. After several months waiting for a response, NALGO retaliated by putting a full embargo on decentralisation which lasted almost a year and which prevented any progress being made in the initiative. To add insult to injury, the union was then blamed by the Council and the press for holding back the process of change.

Political insensitivity of this sort has made the unions even more suspicious of what the 'new Left' is trying to do. From the union point of view it seems to confirm that the council will listen to the unions and allow them to participate only when it suits the Council and on its own terms. As employers, the unions suggest, the new Left can be as ruthless and hard-fisted as any Tory.

The tragedy is that both parties are struggling towards the same progressive ends — but they are speaking a different language. One is the language of members' interests and negotiation. The other is the language of public interest and participation. In Sheffield, the Labour Council and NALGO have been in complete agreement about general campaigning issues such as the miners' strike or fighting racism. But between September and December last year they were locked in a bitter industrial dispute over the introduction of the new technology related to decentralisation.

Can a common language be found? Encouraging sounds have been made by some NALGO branches which are beginning to think about ways in which they can play a more participative role without losing their right to negotiate. They are also beginning to recognise the need for more direct links with the community. Islington NALGO has agreed to open-plan offices with no security screens between staff and the public. Nationally, NALGO has recently launched a massive campaign called 'Put People First.'

On the other side, the Labour councils are beginning to take their responsibilities as employers more seriously. They are starting to find ways of implementing the political changes they are committed to without defying the unions and all that they stand for. It is an unenviable task but not an impossible one. Lambeth Council has now reached full union agreement over decentralisation and even Hackney looks as though it is moving towards full union agreement. Elsewhere, ironically, the fight against rate-capping has temporarily brought the two sides closer together and helped to heal some of the wounds opened by decentralisation.

If a common language is not found, however, the possibility of a more permanent alliance between the unions and the new Left looks seriously in doubt. This in turn could threaten the new Left's alternative route to socialism. The implications go further still. Will the public rally round the rate-capped authorities in their struggle against central government when the changes they were promised at the last local elections have not materialised? Will they support councils that from the outside look so internally divided? As one Hackney tenant put it: 'Those councillors who are risking all they've got to defend the council must be bloody mad! There's nothing about it worth defending.' □

Edward Pilkington is a member of a team looking into decentralisation funded by the GLC and based at the Polytechnic of Central London. The views expressed in this article are the author's own.

DEFENCE

TRIDENT AND THE FATAL FIBRES

Indra de Lanerolle reports on the scandal of moving an MoD asbestos dump to accommodate Trident

THE MINISTRY of Defence is set to begin moving part of one of the biggest untreated asbestos dumps in Britain at the Clyde Submarine Base at Faslane, the intended home of the Trident submarine fleet. The asbestos covers most of a 62-acre site to the north of the existing base.

Asbestos safety experts are extremely concerned at the scale of the removal operation. As Jim Renton, West of Scotland Director of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), admitted when the MoD first announced the existence of what it estimates to be 100,000 cubic metres of contaminated material, normal procedure would be to seal the site. However, this would rule out building on the site, severely disrupting the plans for Trident. The MoD has therefore taken the decision to move the asbestos, an action which even the Property Services Agency who are in charge of the development admit is, to their knowledge, without precedent. Although the MoD has to

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consult the Dumbarton District Council and HSE over the decontamination it can go over their heads to the Secretary of State if they fail to agree.

Ted Rushworth, an independent safety consultant and previously a Principal Inspector with the HSE believes it ought to be left alone: 'I don't think anybody has ever considered moving a mountain of asbestos before. I'm quite sure that under normal circumstances no reasonable person would consider moving the asbestos from the site, nor would the HSE.'

There is no safe level of asbestos pollution. Current HSE safety limits vary from 200 to 500 fibres per litre of air, depending on the type of asbestos. All three types, brown, blue and white, are present at Faslane. Whatever the safety levels, the government has admitted that even the smallest number of the microscopic fibres entering the lungs can cause mesothelioma which is fatal and for which there is no cure. Asbestos also causes lung cancer and asbestosis.

Before asbestos is moved it is damped-down to stop the fibres from becoming air-borne. Millions of gallons of water will have to be sprayed continously over the 62-acre Faslane site. Channels will have to be dug to drain the water which need to be filtered to avoid contaminating the River Clyde or otherwise recycled. All workers will have to strip and shower before leaving the site and change all clothes. According to Rushworth, respirators would be 'prudent'.

In normal circumstances asbestos waste is 'double-bagged' on site before being transported to a dump licenced to take asbestos. At each stage of bagging it should be watered down or vacuum cleaned to make sure no fibres remain. It is unlikely such a method will be adopted at Faslane. Alternatives such as the use of skips or loading directly onto lorries or barges would probably require specially designed containers which could be sealed for transportation. During loading, waste would have to be kept under a spray of water. If road transport is used, the lorries would have to be thoroughly decontaminated each time they left the site. The MoD have suggested that water transport might be used although this presents similar difficulties of loading and unloading.

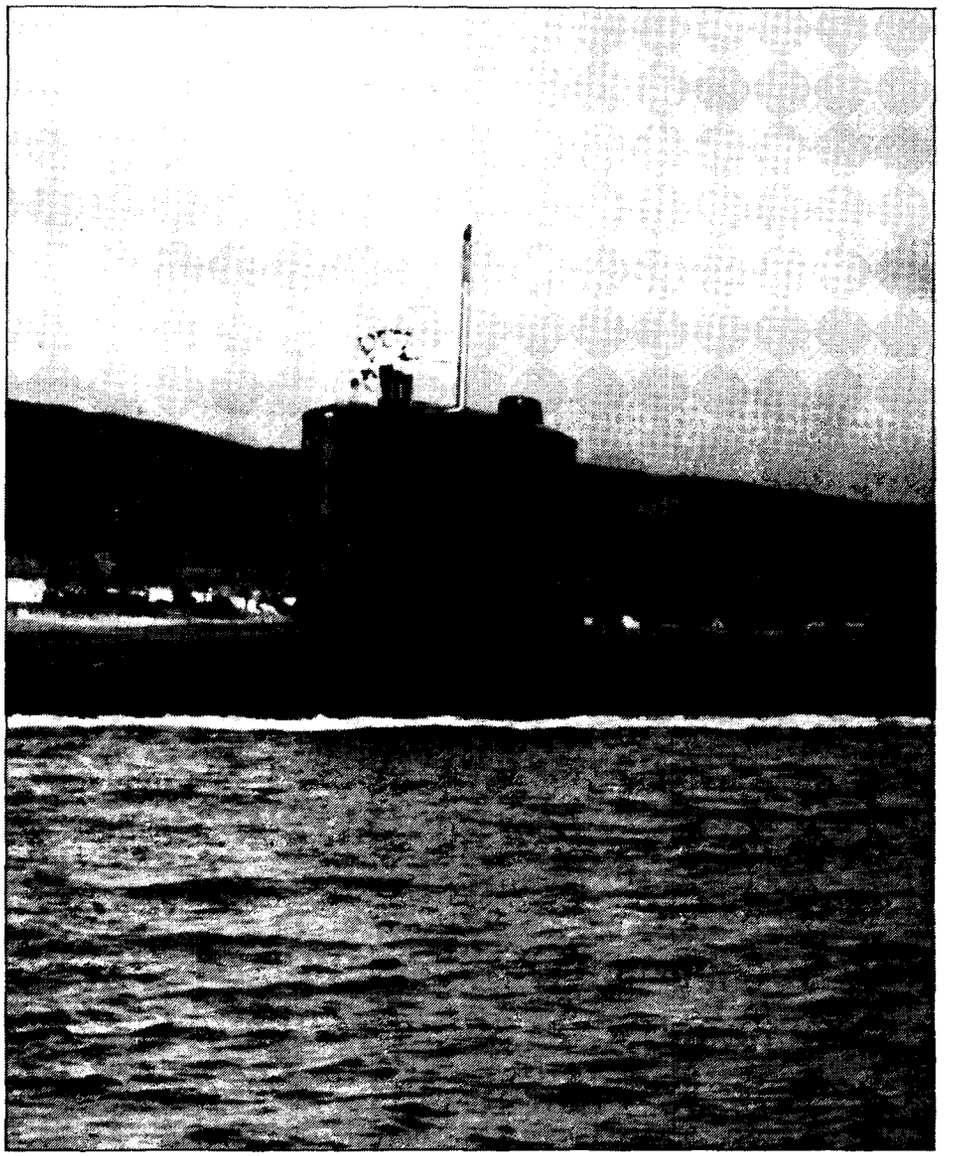
TENDERS HAVE already been received for the waste removal contracts and the Property Services Agency is currently negotiating terms with a number of contractors. However, the MoD's greatest problem may be in finding a suitable dump. There are only a handful of dumps licenced for asbestos in the West of Scotland and it is uncertain whether any of them are large enough. One dump which may be considered is an old open-cast mine in East Kilbride. The owners have applied for a licence to dispose of asbestos waste to the Labour controlled District Council and it is thought that they will be granted it in the next few weeks in spite of opposition from local community councils. Another possibility is a dump at Glenboig recently licenced for asbestos. Both are near Glasgow.

The PSA say that they expect to complete the decontamination of the site before the timetabled start of construction work which, according to the MoD's 'Environmental Impact Assessment,' is the second half of this year. The PSA's confidence seems surprising. But as one safety expert put it: 'It is a ridiculous project. But with enough money it is not impossible and where defence is concerned it appears money is no object.'

The first part of the decontamination process, expected to bagin shortly, will involve skimming 30cm off the surface of a small area adjoining the existing base. The area is only 6,500 square metres in size though the PSA expect it to produce around 3,000 cubic metres of waste. This calls into question their estimate of 100,000 cubic metres of waste for the whole site of 62 acres. According to their own studies, waste is buried at the other end of the site to a depth of up to 5 metres, a figure which is disputed by workers once employed at the shipyard, who say it goes to 8 metres.

The asbestos at Faslane is the result of shipbreaking operations which ended in 1981 when the lease from the MoD expired. In spite of visits by HSE inspectors, workers employed by Shipbreaking Industries (owned at various times by Thorn and the 600 Group and once part-owned by British Steel) paint a terrifying picture of conditions on the site. They say asbestos was lying around everywhere, sometimes dumped into the water and only on days when inspectors visited was it ever packed into bags as regulations require. The yard broke up many of the ships from Britain's wartime navy in the 1950s including the aircraft carriers 'Renown' and 'Resolution', ironically now the names of Polaris submarines based at Faslane.

According to the workers, much of the land on the waterline is reclaimed land made up of asbestos contaminated waste some of which has ended up in the water. The PSA have told the District Council that 100 tonnes of scrap metal, some of which is coated in asbestos, is lying on the bed of two berths which they want to dredge. □



HMS Resolution steams out of Faslane

NEW STATESMAN INDEX

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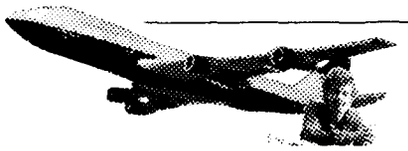
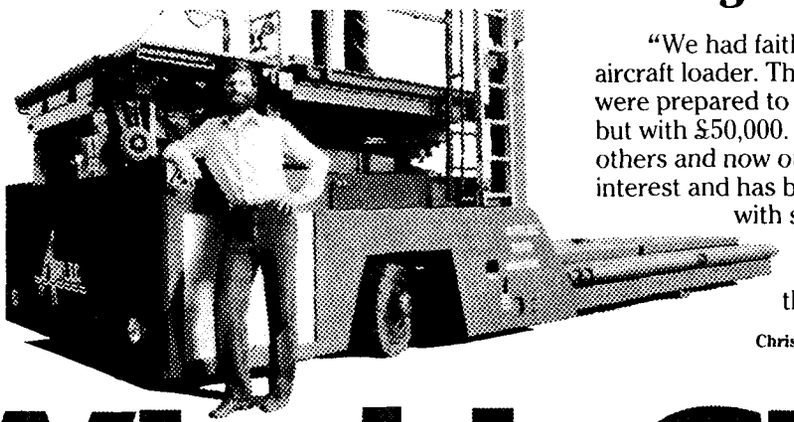


"Without GLEB we'd never have got off the ground"



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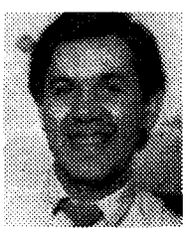

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THE WORKPLACE

DYING FOR A LAUGH

Ian Williams reflects on the saving graces of Scouse sardonic wit

SOME 10 YEARS ago, along with another railway worker, I was supposed to be learning about the signals and gradients of the Trans-Pennine line from Liverpool to Leeds. The best way to do so, of course, is to sit with the driver.

It is an added bonus that you can get a much better view of the scenery from the side windows of a local Diesel unit without the fear of vandals' half bricks associated with urban runs. As we puttered and puffed up the gradients through banks of lush vegetation of an almost tropically intense green that bright day in early summer it seemed to be the most perfect place in a perfect world.

Approaching the station of a mill town on the Yorkshire side, I called the driver's attention to someone crossing the line by the platform 'Watch out for that idiot,' I had just finished saying, as the man turned to face us, and looked at us with an intensity which conveyed that he had no intention of moving. He continued to stare as the driver threw on emergency brakes.

It is one of the cruellest, most nightmarish things, to sit in a train, knowing that whatever you do, with a fatal inexorability you will hit someone who has both identified themselves as human and, almost, introduced themselves personally by looking so deeply into your eyes. There is no way to swerve with a train. The tracks keep you on the straight and narrow while the laws of friction and momentum have already condemned your victim.

The train was still glissading forward, sparks flying from the wheels, as I hurled myself onto the platform, and ran back to see where he was. On the sleepers, underneath a bogey, he was huddled — and beginning to move. After shouting to Frank who had followed me down the platform, I climbed down to see what could be done for him. It was difficult to believe that anyone could be so badly injured and yet survive.

I was told later that the flanges of railway wheels will pressure weld the blood vessels shut, applying a tourniquet even as they torture and maim. Which is why he now survived, conscious, with the top of his skull lifted like the top of a breakfast egg, one leg hung on by a tendon from the knee, the other shin stripped of flesh to the bone.

Indeed, he not only survived, he struggled, shouting repeatedly 'I'm a failure' as I tried to make him comfortable, although comfort was not a word I could easily use in such a context. I lied and told him he would be all right, privately convinced that if suicide was his intention, he had not completely failed. I could not see him lasting long.

THE ONLY WAY to get him out was to move the train, and so I had to hold him, while he thrashed about struggling to scratch the gaping wound atop his head, moving limbs that would only partially respond, while overhead and on either side the train moved, guillotining wheels scything one twitch away.

Pale and trembling, I climbed the platform, to be greeted by a reporter and photographer rushing breathlessly. 'We're from News. What were 'is name?' they asked. 'I wasn't introduced, you bloody ghouls,' I spat as my colleagues physically restrained me from launching myself at them.

Recognising the superiority of the laws of humanity over those of the licensing bench, a police sergeant forced a just closed pub to open for a tranquilising drink, but I was still shaken as I began the long trek back to Liverpool, trying to switch off the constant mental action replay of the whole incident. Each time I closed my eyes, I saw his, staring as we bore down on him.

Back in Liverpool intent on washing away the memory we staggered into the pub closest the loco-shed, which was, as usual, thickly populated with railway workers. I was ashen faced and if anything more bleakly depressed than before. But it was not the drink, despite copious doses of it, which was effective as an anti-depressant.

Big George stood in his accustomed place at the bar, surrounded by empty and rapidly emptying Guinness bottles, and seeing my obvious distraught state asked Frank what had happened. Frank laconically explained that someone had 'took a dive' and what my part had been.

'Was he a passenger?' asked George with morbid curiosity. 'No,' said Frank, 'He got a platform ticket, and came on the station to do it.' 'Got a platform ticket?' said Big George, philosophically, shaking his head, 'He must have just come to see himself off!'

The dams burst, I could laugh. Without diminishing the horror, or the sympathy, laughter made the incident manageable. It is only in retrospect that I realised that the sardonic Scouse birthright of black humour is a way of bearing the unbearable, of reducing a big cruel world to laughable, and hence manageable proportions. It saved me then and even for the next two suicides over another six months.

George commented that the Samaritans told callers what train I was on 'since they're assured of a sympathetic hearing off you.' It isn't a funny old world. But it helps if you pretend. □

THE SECRET DOCTRINE

There is a tradition of an Ancient Wisdom relevant, however, to any age and people. It tells of the eternal verities of existence, of Universal processes and laws which are of the nature of Nature herself — of whom we are all part.

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RACISM

THE LAW IS NOT ABOVE IT

Jolyon Jenkins looks at the bar to black lawyers

RAVINDER SINGH is a 22-year-old law student with a respectable academic record — he gained a good lower second degree at university and passed four of the six finals 'heads' (exam papers) at the first sitting. But he has been looking for articles for over a year, with no success.

He is sure that the reason is that he is a Sikh, in a profession dominated by the white middle class. 'There's no way I can actually prove it,' he says, 'but at the few interviews I was invited to I definitely got that impression, and most firms wouldn't even give me an interview.' Ravinder says he knows of plenty of his white contemporaries with far worse exam results who got articles without difficulty. 'There's no doubt about it — the Asians at college were desperately looking for articles and getting nowhere. We began to wonder what we had to do to succeed, and a lot of us decided there was no hope until we had our exam results and could prove our ability.'

Ravinder's complaint is by no means unique: for years black lawyers and law students have claimed that they have been unfairly treated by the rest of the profession. So when *Legal Action* uncovered an unpublished report by The Law Society which claimed there was no significant racial discrimination in the solicitors' profession and that no corrective action was needed (*Legal Action*, January 1985), the noteworthy fact was not that The Law Society had kept its report secret (it hadn't, particularly), but that it was being quite open about having come to such an under-researched and implausible conclusion. In fact, when in November I spoke to the secretary of the working party that produced the report, Mr T.R.P. Rudin, he quoted me large chunks from it (although I was not allowed to read it) and spent some time justifying its conclusions to me.

The working party was only ever set up because the Benson Royal Commission on Legal Services (1979) wrote, almost in passing: 'There is an urgent need for both branches of the profession to develop policies to prevent even the appearance of discrimination in legal practice. Failure to achieve full racial integration in the legal profession would have so serious an effect that a heavy responsibility rests on the governing bodies of both branches to take whatever steps are necessary to avoid it.'

But it was not until 1982 that The Law Society started to do anything about Benson's recommendations. According to Mr Rudin: 'Possibly we were a little slow off the mark, but we didn't actually think there was a problem.'

As *Legal Action* reported, the only outside evidence the working party sought was at a meeting of six black solicitors which lasted a little over an hour. The working party made no

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Sibghat Kadri: 'I defended the Newham eight and I won; I defended the Bradford twelve and I won; I defended the Bristol riots cases and I won. . .So why haven't the white solicitors who briefed me sent me any more work?'

UPP

attempt to find instances of discrimination. It did not invite complaints from aggrieved black solicitors. Mr Rudin explained: 'If you invite people to complain then they complain, even if there are no grounds for complaint. It just wastes a lot of people's time. But if anybody has a genuine complaint then I should like to hear it.' So what evidence did they take? 'We asked the local Law Societies in the country and we asked around the building here.'

ONE OVERWHELMING difficulty facing any attempt to conduct proper research into the issue is that there are no records kept of the ethnic origins of solicitors. Informed guesses suggest that perhaps 200 solicitors are black — about 0.25 per cent. But The Law Society has made no attempt to obtain any reliable figures. Its justification is that at their meeting with the six black solicitors they were told that it would be offensive if The Law Society were to send out questionnaires to solicitors asking about their ethnic origins. 'They were most vociferous about it,' Mr Rudin told me.

Ever since that meeting, The Law Society has felt absolved from any duty to gather proper data. This contrasts with the attitude of the Bar Senate Race Relations Committee, also set up in response to Benson. Faced with similar difficulties, it asked for the co-operation of the Society of Black Lawyers, which provided it with useable figures and information. On the basis of this material, the committee concluded that there was significant 'de facto segregation' of black barristers, that black barristers were at a disadvantage, and that something ought to be done about it. According to Christopher Boothman, vice-president of the Society of Black Lawyers, The Law Society made no formal request for assistance in any way.

In the absence of proper statistics, one has to fall back on anecdotal evidence. It's not hard to find. While researching this article I came across many examples of black law students who seemed to have had more than their fair share of difficulties. An Indian with an upper second degree had been looking for articles for two years. A young British articled clerk of Asian origin told me that he felt he had had to work twice as hard as white students to get where he was, and had only succeeded because he was lucky enough to have contacts in the profession. Another black solicitor in her mid-twenties, of West Indian origin, was sure that she had only got interviews because of her English sounding name: 'But their faces soon fell when I walked through the door — there was a quick interview and I was soon outside again. In the end I got articles because one of the partners said "These blacks have got such chips on their shoulders we'll have to take her on." He didn't say it to me but I heard about it later.'

Several law lecturers confirmed that their black students had more difficulty than white students in getting articles, or ended up having to work in underfunded law centres in predominantly black areas. (The Law Society's report actually noted that it was easier for black lawyers and students to get work in these areas, but rather than deploring this for leading to segregation, seemed to welcome it as providing more jobs for black solicitors.) One black lawyer told me that white firms were deliberately taking on black staff to attract black clients, but only in clerical jobs in the outer office.

If some white solicitors are making things difficult for black students, then there are also allegations from black barristers that they too are suffering because white solicitors will not brief them. The prominent black barrister, Sibghat Kadri, told me: 'I defended the Newham eight and I won; I defended the Bradford twelve and I won; I defended the Bristol riots cases and I won. These were difficult cases, so it can't be that I'm no good. So why haven't the white solicitors who briefed me in those cases sent me any more work?'

Kadri has shown me a letter to him from a prisoner remanded in Winson Green: 'I have instructed my solicitor that my case should be forwarded to you without delay,' it says. Kadri wrote to the solicitor, who replied: 'This is the first indication that [name] had a Counsel in mind, and in fact, we have already instructed Birmingham Counsel . . .' Kadri says that he has received 30 or 40 such letters from black members of the public whose (white) solicitors have refused to accept Kadri as Counsel.

Because of the archaic protocol that prevents a barrister communicating with a client except through a solicitor, there is not much a black barrister in this position can do. Most black barristers already face the problem that they do not have the network of informal contacts that white barristers rely on. According to Kadri: 'All we have is the support of the black community. But between them and us we have the white solicitors.' The legal profession does not welcome such remarks: when Rudy Narayan made similar complaints he was hauled before a disciplinary tribunal, although the charges were dismissed.

Few people would suggest that most solicitors are deliberately racist or that The Law Society is deliberately covering up a problem it knows exists. As the Society says, it is not an employer and so cannot be held responsible for the pattern of recruitment. But many employers of solicitors are members of The Law Society and it could be expected to exercise some influence on them. Furthermore, it could make it a disciplinary offence for a solicitor not to brief a barrister whom the client has specifically chosen. By its complacent attitude The Law Society could be storing up trouble for itself in the future, just as Benson feared. Of this year's intake of law students at the South Bank Polytechnic, for example, 40 per cent are black. □

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WHO'S BETRAYED WHAT?

Deputy GLC leader and Chair of Finance John McDonnell replies to Ken Livingstone's attack on him (*NS* 22 March)

SINCE THE GLC'S RATE was set Ken Livingstone has circulated numerous articles and reports to justify the failure of some members of the GLC Labour Group to back the London Labour Party policy of councils not setting a rate. They are a distortion of what really happened at County Hall over the GLC's budget and reflect the desperation of those who betrayed party policy.

This article sets out my position. It is also an attempt to set aside the bitterness and recriminations over the GLC budget and to prevent a split within the party. If the party does not unite now in the face of continuing attacks on our community from the Thatcher government, it is only the Tories who will benefit.

Rate-capping was properly seen by party members as an integral part of the government's overall attack on the standard of living of our people and also on our basic democratic rights. The decision was taken by the London Labour Party that we should stand and fight rate-capping now to prevent it becoming a permanent weapon for the government in successive years to dismantle local services.

There were extensive discussions in the party at every level on which tactic the councils should follow to defeat rate-capping. By massive majorities at two London Labour Party conferences the policy of not setting a rate was adopted. Endorsing the tactic of not setting a rate Ken Livingstone wrote: 'Irrespective of the odds, Labour councils have no option but to refuse to comply with the new law.'

We all knew that the various councils were in different financial positions. Some had more resources than others and some could protect their services for a longer period than others. It was critical to us, however, that all the councils stood together in not setting a rate so that the government could not pick us off one by one. To quote Ken again (March 1984, *Labour Herald*): 'If the government is particularly clever they may demand relatively low cuts in the first year knowing that this will increase pressure on Labour councillors to stay in office and make the cuts as painlessly as possible. Then in the following year when Labour councillors are implicated up to their necks in the new system, and any campaign has been dissipated, the government would go for the really big reductions.'

Throughout the GLC's budget meetings several left councillors stood firm on party policy. We refused to vote for a GLC budget and rate. We refused to renege on the mandate we were given by the party.

THE FIRST EXCUSE put forward by Ken Livingstone is to blame the other rate-capped councils, accusing them of 'a betrayal of the tactic that we should all stand together against the government and not be picked off one at a time'. This is a distortion. The agreement reached between the GLC, ILEA and other rate-capped councils was that the rate-capping campaign would be a sequential development of struggle over a limited period — the Scottish authorities on 5 March, the GLC/ILEA on 7 March, and the boroughs passing motions in their council chambers on 7 March (the same as Liverpool last year) leaving them open to legal challenge in early April.

It was always recognised that the GLC/ILEA would be out in front of the other councils. At the meeting of Labour Council leaders in February David Blunkett suggested for this reason that the GLC should fix a rate but *both* Mike Ward and I rejected this suggestion on the grounds that it was contrary to London Labour Party policy which was for the GLC not to set a rate. In the fortnight before the GLC budget day Ken Livingstone and I met David Blunkett and re-confirmed the agreement.

It was then in the week before the London Labour Party Conference of 2/3 March that Ken Livingstone started to undermine the opportunity of achieving a no-rate policy on the GLC by accusing the boroughs of betraying party policy, although it was clear that the boroughs were adhering to the agreement he had put his name to.

The next excuse was that I had, in Ken Livingstone's words, 'systematically lied to the Labour Group about the Council's finances'. In reality Ken Livingstone knew the exact financial position of the council as far back as 1 October 1984 when I wrote to him pointing out (prophetically as it turned out) the financial manoeuvres which the GLC's Director-General and Reg Race, would recommend to enable the GLC to opt out of the rate-capping struggle.

Ken Livingstone agreed then that it would be unacceptable to use creative accountancy or the Council's borrowing capacity to get the GLC off the hook and to break ranks with the other councils. In the weeks leading up to the GLC's budget day, financial reports were given to all GLC councillors setting out the GLC's exact financial position. Ken Livingstone was fully briefed. As predicted, when the GLC's budget day neared both the GLC's Director-General and Reg Race produced proposals to increase the GLC borrowing and other financial measures to enable the GLC to cop out of the rate-capping struggle.

Ken Livingstone approached me with these proposals on Friday 1 March, and I rejected them because the government would only allow the GLC to get away with increasing its borrowing in order to buy the GLC off and isolate other rate-capping councils.

On Sunday 3 March, Ken Livingstone spoke at the London Labour Party conference but made no reference to the budget proposals put to him by the Director-General and Reg Race. Instead I gave the conference details of the GLC's exact financial position and of the deal on offer. I said that to accept the deal to protect the GLC's jobs and services for this financial year, with the government's complicity, would mean betraying the boroughs and turning the GLC into the Nottingham Area of the rate-capping struggle. The conference re-confirmed its policy and mandated councillors not to set a rate.

It became clear at this stage that Ken Livingstone was working to undermine party policy. It was revealed that on the Wednesday before the conference he had given a private briefing to Anne Jacobs of the *Sunday Times*, setting out voting figures on the GLC Labour Group and predicting a defeat for the no-rate supporters. This could only have been with the objective of undermining support for not setting a rate on the GLC. In addition borough leaders reported that during the conference they were approached by Reg Race offering their boroughs GLC cash aid for next year on the basis that the GLC would be making a rate and the boroughs' finances would collapse.

Throughout Monday 4 March, Ken Livingstone convened meetings with selected GLC councillors without inviting me and several key left councillors. When the Labour Group met on Monday evening Ken Livingstone presented the Labour Group with a budget and a rate. Mike Ward argued that GLC councillors could not be mandated by party conference decisions. In quite a skilful manoeuvre Ken Livingstone and Mike Ward had effectively undermined support in the Labour Group for the party policy and a majority of the Labour Group duly voted for setting a rate.

Andrew Ward/Report

Scapegoat bites back — John McDonnell

SINCE THE GLC's budget day, Ken Livingstone has sought to scapegoat me by accusing me of deceit. The line of argument is that I prevented GLC expenditure during the year to allow the GLC to comply with rate-capping. Both charges are nasty, petty abuses which do not hold water.

During the last financial year, with rate-capping looming, the GLC's legal and finance officers have sought to push the Council into complying with the law and cutting expenditure. Reports were introduced by officers which sought to restrict expenditure but on each occasion I found mechanisms to overcome the restrictions they tried to impose. As a result not a *single* item of expenditure proposed by any of the spending committees

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has been blocked.

As far as preparing a fall-back position is concerned, I put forward, in line with party policy, a budget for the GLC of £100 million growth, rejecting a rate rise, in September 1984. This followed the same line as the other rate-capped councils as the basis of demands for the government to repeal rate-capping, and if a rate was agreed, to form the basis of an illegal deficit budget.

From the moment I obtained for the Labour Group a legal opinion which enabled the Tories at County Hall to abstain on the final rate vote, we had a chance of winning. It was at that stage that what one commentator called 'political incontinence' broke out at County Hall. We were on the brink of taking on the Thatcher government with all the risks of surcharge, bankruptcy and disqualification which that entailed. If Ken had held firm on the no-rate position it is likely that the centre and soft Left would have followed him.

During the Council meeting on Sunday 10 March, the argument put forward for dropping the no-rate policy was that if we didn't vote for Ken Livingstone's budget the right wing would propose a larger cuts budget which the Tories would vote for. The proposals put forward by the right wing were no different in their effect on GLC jobs and services than Ken Livingstone's budget. Although the right wing's budget was based upon a rate 3p below the maximum precept allowed for the GLC, the income lost through having a lower rate is compensated for by an increase in block grant from the government and an increase in borrowing.

In the final meeting of the Labour Group at 7pm on Sunday 10 March, Ken Livingstone actually recommended the right wing to vote for the lower precept on the basis that there was no difference between the two budgets except that the right wing budget would enable money to be moved out of the GLC sooner and more easily than the budget based on the maximum rate. The right wing duly followed his advice and moved the lower rate which was supported by the Tories. Ken Livingstone was thus able to come out of the council chamber and publicly condemn the Left for following the lower rate.

When we were elected onto the GLC we were viewed as a left advance, the arrival of an administration which would abide by the basic principles of our movement — in particular accountability and solidarity in struggle. Above all else we were seen as a challenge to the Thatcher government.

The issue of rate-capping for the GLC was not simply to protect itself. Our conscience as socialists does not end at the GLC boundary, nor does it extend only to our own services. We should be as concerned about the plight of the unemployed and homeless or underprivileged in Liverpool, Scotland and Sheffield as we are about Londoners experiencing the same deprivation. Not setting a rate on the GLC was to have been a courageous act of solidarity with socialists in struggle throughout the country.

For Ken Livingstone publicly to abuse comrades on the Left, who have been the prime basis of his support in the GLC Labour Group and who have undertaken over the last four years the hard daily slog of forcing through our policies, was a betrayal of the comradeship to which we felt entitled. □

Telling the news from the soaps

John Ellis

ARE TV SOAP operas and TV news more similar than is commonly assumed? With two new British-made soaps recently launched (ITV's *The Practice* and BBC's *Eastenders*); with Channel 4's *Brookside* becoming accepted as part of the landscape at the same moment as *Channel 4 News*; with *Dallas* and *Dynasty* regularly featuring as news items, perhaps the question needs a serious answer.

There are considerable similarities of form and presentation between The News and The Soaps. Both demand a considerable long-term investment of resources from broadcasting organisations in terms of resources and peak-hour schedule time. Both are examples of that peculiarly televisual form, the endless narrative series unfolding in the present tense. Unlike the serial, which always has a *dénouement* in its final episode, both news and soap are literally never-ending. Little story segments resolve themselves (ministers resign — or don't — over scandals; the irresolute man in *The Practice* eventually has his vasectomy), but it is the very nature of both soap and news that there is always a new story to replace them.

Soaps have a core cast of regulars, and other characters who pass through; so does the news, with its insistence on Thatcher, Reagan, and the irregular cast of irritants they have to deal with (football hooligans, Nicaraguans, CND). News has a regular flow of problems that its characters confront; so do the soaps. Both forms consist of a bunch of separate storylines running concurrently, a few of which collide with each other. Both forms are careful to leaven their dramatic seriousness with touches of humour.

The two forms may be similar, but they are not identical. They have major differences, which mean that they cannot be confused one with the other. But their similarities do seem to imply that their meanings shade into each other.

The basic difference between news and soaps is that they tell their stories differently. In the soaps, stories are told directly, without mediation. It's very rare for one character to tell another how something has happened: we see it happen for ourselves. With news, we hardly ever see for ourselves. Everything is reported to us by a series of mediators, *story tellers*. These storytellers have comparatively little to show us of events taking place; and when they do have footage, it needs their narration to make it comprehensible.

This difference in ways of telling stories means that each form has a forbidden area. News does not deal with emotion; the soaps don't deal with current political issues. The news does not tell us what Mrs Thatcher felt, it tells us what she did. The state of mind of world leaders only becomes an issue when they commit a gaffe so major that it cannot be overlooked; or when they are presumed to be crazy, like Colonel Gadafy. Soap operas don't mention things which are current political news stories. *The Practice* may deal with all the socio-medical problems you ever want to know about (and more), but it does not develop any substantial reaction or action over increased prescription charges. And in *Brookside* we've had the extraordinary spectacle of (to my knowledge), a complete lack of discussion of the miners' strike for a whole year, followed by a sophisticated assessment of it by a group of trade unionists once it was all over.

In the news, no emotions, but lots of politics. In the soaps, plenty of emotions, but nothing from the national political arena. The taboo areas of the two forms are complementary. And given the similarities between the two forms, surely it is not stretching things to assert that what each form lacks, the other provides. So the news provides the soaps with a backdrop of facts against which the reality of the soap-world can be measured. Conversely, the emotions that are lacking in the news are provided by the soap operas.

The implications of this second point are what worry me: do *Dallas* and *Dynasty* covertly inform our understanding of news stories about industry: was Ian Macgregor seen by the nation's TV audience as J.R. Ewing (delightfully evil) or as a Blake Carrington (harassed, ruthless and righteous)? And what about the more diffuse effect of the soaps' rich emotional world leaking into its kindred world of the news? It's the soaps that allow us to make sense of 'The Prime Minister *hits out* . . .' or the daft terminology of '*wets*' and '*drys*'. When news and soap opera merge, what place is there for political debate? □

John Ellis is co-producer of Visions, *Channel 4's monthly programme about cinema.*

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DIARY

David Edgar

Warsaw

First reactions to Warsaw are bound to feel naive. It seems a kind of pretension to think of this dull, grey city as somehow the quintessence, if not of the century, then at least of its bloodiest event. But, of course, the truth that this place suffered uniquely and in a sense exclusively shrieks from the very ground you walk on; and, indeed, the ground itself is heavy with metaphor. In their last act of occupation, following the suppression of the 63-day uprising, the Germans proceeded doggedly to flatten Warsaw's centre, street by street and house by house, much of which, with equal doggedness, the Poles rebuilt, from plans and maps and drawings, in the post-war years. Warsaw's 'old town' is thus a film set (and one side of its main square, indeed, is literally a façade: what appears to be eight individual houses forms the frontage of one building), and so precious are the new floors of the rebuilt Royal Palace, laid on foundations of rubble and bone, that visitors are required to wear ill-fitting, floppy felt galoshes, on which they slide and shuffle across inlaid wood and patterned marble floors, through rooms in which the gold leaf frames and decorations are as light and bright and clean and thus apparently unreal as tinsel. Other places of resistance and destruction have been less well restored. The site of the main Warsaw synagogue is now the base of the city's nearest approximation to Centre Point; the monument to the Ghetto Uprising of 1943 dominates a wide, windswept square of hideously ugly '50s apartment housing; the borders of the ghetto are no longer visible in any form at all.

○

A Polish dog and a Czech dog meet at the border of the two countries. 'Why on earth are you going to Czechoslovakia?' asks the Czech dog, in great surprise. 'Well, obviously, because I want to eat', replies the Pole. 'But why would anybody want to go to Poland?' 'Well, naturally', replies the Czech, 'because I want to bark'.

○

It seems that nobody in Poland even lowers their voice any more — except, perhaps, those who want to express sentiments in favour of the government, or at the very least, questioning the role of Solidarity (one young women I met complained that her friends were hostile to her when she attended a boycotted theatre, and there expressed the view that martial law had been imposed none too soon: but as she spoke she dropped her voice and looked nervously around). This may partly be a matter of national character: there is quite a lot of contempt for the softly-softly, subtly diplomatic Hungarians (whose leader Janos Kadar's reputedly favourite joke against himself consisted in its 1981 form of Brezhnev, Reagan and Kadar dying on the same day, and being offered by God one wish. Both Brezhnev and Reagan demand the complete and utter destruction of the other's political system and all its works; Kadar wonders if it would be inconvenient to be served a small glass of cold beer). It is thus somehow doubly distressing to witness at first hand what happens to a country where the commodity with the greatest exchange value is possessed in relative abundance only by visitors. At the official rate, the dollar is 135 zlotys: on the streets (or in restaurants, hotel lobbies and taxis) one dollar is at least 500 zlotys, or a quarter of the cost of the monthly meat ration, or indeed a thirtieth of the average monthly wage. Thus a unit of currency which on its home territory would be spurned as a tip pays for a meal.

○

'So, who's the luckiest man in Warsaw?'

'Easy. The doorman of the Palace of Culture'.

'You're crazy. The building is the most terrible eyesore in Poland'.

'Exactly. And he's the only one who doesn't have to look at it all day'.

○

To need a staple someone else's loose change is a form of dependence. It is not the only form of dependence you see in Warsaw. From the ground, the notorious Palace of Culture — the Soviet Union's post-war gift to a grateful Polish people — looks less monolithic, more absurdly rococo, than it does on the newsreels (indeed one of its many soubriquets is 'the largest wedding cake in the world'). From the *air*, however, the fullness of its purpose is suddenly plain. In the years immediately after the war, with Poland a starving bombsite, Stalin decided to give the capital of his new satellite its very own Empire State Building. Yes, it's much lower, and thus appears more squat and stumpy than the original, like a candle half burnt down. But against the whole skyline the intended echo is nonetheless transparent.

○

'So, why did Father Popieluszko's killer get 25 years?'

'Simple. A year for killing Popieluszko. And 24 for letting the driver get away'.

○

On our last day, to Father Popieluszko's grave, in the simple graveyard of his church in suburban Warsaw (the 'us' is myself and fellow-playwright Dusty Hughes, in Poland for a conference on the Playwright and Translation). The grave is now the main Solidarity shrine — with not only the flowers and permanently burning candles, but also all kinds of messages and mementoes, including, we're told, three of the highest Polish military decorations, won in World War Two and donated by their recipients. We are asked to write a message in the book of condolence, with an enthusiasm which leads us to fear that our importance in the scheme of things may have been just a little over-estimated. But in retrospect, of course, that's not the point. *Everyone* spoke of the importance of outside support — verbal as well as material — for Solidarity; *everyone* mourned what they regarded as its decline since the imposition of martial law. Which is why, when we talked about the importance of the support groups during our own miners' strike — both to the miners and the groups themselves — there were immediate nods of understanding.

ROGER WODDIS

The Song of Six-gun

'The Geneva arms talks are doomed to failure, because President Reagan has never learned the old Indian maxim, "You can't smoke a peace pipe with one hand and load a six-gun with the other."' — Letter to Time *magazine.*

In the crowded Hall of Congress,
In the great Debating Chamber,
Six-gun Jellybean, the mighty,
He the Chief of all the Yanquis
Smoked the calumet, the Peace-Pipe,
And the smoke rose bravely, bravely,
As he talked of bears and eagles,
Talked of peace and Nancy's Summit,
While he spun his MX six-gun.
And he swung the Congress to him,
Swung them with his lofty notions,
Spake to them in tones majestic,
As the sound of far-off waters
Falling into deep abysses,
Warning, wooing, spake in this wise:
'O my children! Hear my wisdom!
When we journey to Geneva,
When we go to hold a pow-pow,
Let us prove we are the stronger,
Causing all our foes to tremble,
Tremble at the threat of star-wars!'
And they heard their noble Leader,
Six-gun Jellybean, the mighty,
Heard and nodded their approval,
Granted him the cash he asked for,
For they knew the smoking Peace-Pipe
Meant the prize of many contracts.

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A NEW MASK FOR THE AYATOLLAH

Khomeini has been making overtures of appeasement towards Iraq. Fred Halliday questions their validity and assesses the possible outcomes of the war — now in its 54th month

THE FAILURE of Iran's recent land offensive in the southern marshes of Iran has led to new speculation about a possible negotiated end to this war. Iran has restated its willingness to respect an agreement not to attack Iraq's civilian areas and civilian airlines and a speech by Ayatollah Khomeini on 21 March, the Persian New Year, has been seen by some as a move away from Iran's previously intransigent position.

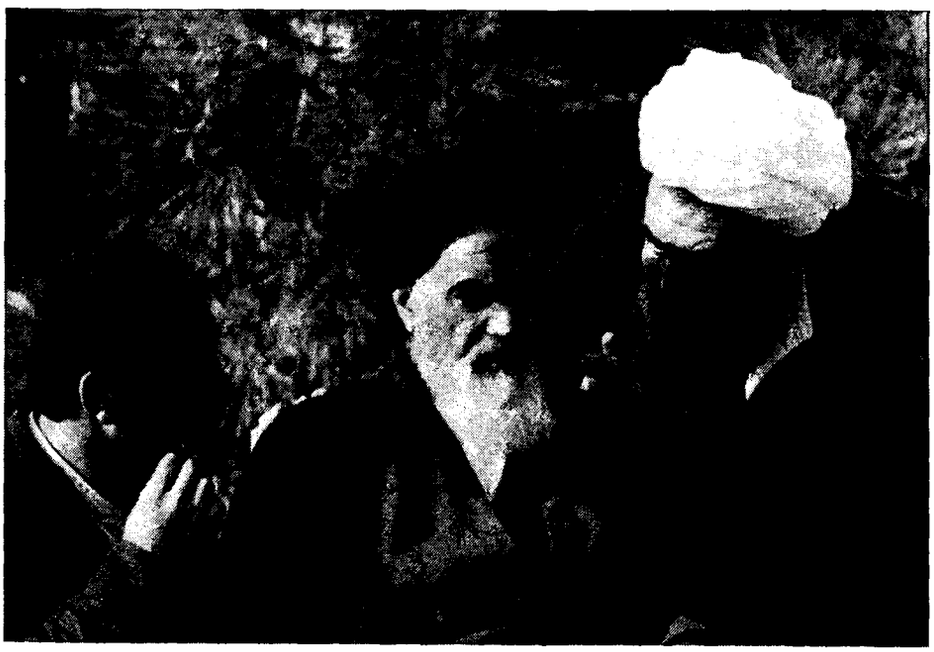
Khomeini did not talk, as he previously had, about the need to remove Iraqi President Saddam Hussein; he spoke instead of the meaninglessness of victory and defeat. Since God was the ultimate authority, Khomeini told his listeners, they had to accept whatever he, or He, decided.

The UN has tried to use Iran's position on not attacking civilians as a step towards broader negotiations. US Secretary of State, George Shultz, interpreted Khomeini's speech as a mellowing of Iran's mood. Perhaps such a change *is* occurring; but Khomeini's tactics in the past should not be forgotten.

First, Iran has all along altered its negotiating position to throw its opponent off balance. This was done during the US hostages crisis, to effect; we can see Reagan doing the same thing to Moscow with the SDI and the Geneva talks. A few days after Khomeini's New Year speech, a Foreign Ministry official in Tehran repeated not only the demand that Saddam go, but also that Iraq pay compensation, and he upped this from the normal Iranian figure of $150 billions to $350 billions.

Secondly, Khomeini himself has learned to speak in several registers. There is the wise patriarch, urging his followers to be cautious and sensible. There is the angry Ayatollah, saying he wished he had erected a gallows on every street corner the moment he came back to the country. And there is pathetic Khomeini, pleading with his followers, saying how sorry he is that things have not turned out right, and presenting himself as a bumbling and benign old mulla. What George Shultz was being treated to was vintage pathetic Khomeini. It remains to be seen whether this pathetic persona will persist: on previous occasions, it has not.

WHAT KHOMEINI, and Saddam, do have to face is that the war is stalemated. It is stalemated on what remains the main front, the 700-mile land frontier. Each party can win or lose a few miles of territory, and kill a lot of each other's soldiers. But neither appears able to score a dramatic breakthrough on land, or to crush the armed forces of the other in a decisive battle. Indeed, neither appears capable of sustaining major land operations for more than a few days. To escape from this, they have both tried other, supplementary, tactics: blocking the other's oil exports, inciting their respective subjects to revolt and mutiny, and, now, bombing each other's cities.



Camera Press

How long will the latest Khomeini — the bumbling old mullah — really last?

The first two supplementary tactics have caused difficulties, but not sufficiently large ones to force retreat. Iraq gets money from other Arab states, Iran can still export over half of what it wants to. Kurds, communists, religious opponents of each have opposed Baghdad and Tehran, but the two oppositions have been too weak, and too internally divided, to challenge their governments effectively. If previous attempts to bomb cities into submission are anything to go by, the current rocket and bomber attacks on Tehran and Baghdad will have little political affect.

If therefore, the current initiatives meet the fate of their predecessors and the war grinds on — as is likely — then a number of different outcomes are possible.

First, there could be a World War I ending: one side or other could become so exhausted that it accepts a humiliating peace, and its respective Kaiser, Saddam or Khomeini, is removed. At the moment, neither side seems to be near such a breaking point: both can still fight and feed their populations. A World War I ending requires that one side be blockaded, and that goal has eluded both sides so far. Each has a lot of resources left before a 1918-style surrender.

Secondly, there could be a Korean War ending: the two states fight to a standstill more or less along the lines existing before the war started, and then accept a cease-fire, but without major concessions on either side. This would be possible on Iraq's side; but Iran has still not given up hope of defeating Iraq. Only a major change of heart in Tehran could produce this result. Bursts of pathetic Khomeini do not add up to *this*.

A military breakthrough leading to the defeat of the other is a third possibility: Iraq has never appeared capable of inflicting such a blow on Iran. Iran has been trying to defeat Iraq in this way with its land offensives. But while the possibility of such an Iranian victory remains, recent offensives suggest that Iran does not have the capability of achieving it; its stamina is too small, Iraq's defences too strong.

A fourth scenario is that of no peace, no war: a reduced version of the current situation could go on for years, or even decades, with neither side either strong enough or exhausted enough to hasten an end. As each side improves its defensive capabilities, and its oil and gas export facilities, the prospect of such a protracted war increases.

THESE FOUR possibilities assume that the war remains confined to its present boundaries and military level. But there are two other developments that would dramatically alter the stalemate and which could result in a decisive victory.

If the current bombing campaign is unlikely to alter political priorities on either side, the possession of even a few nuclear weapons by either Iran or Iraq could certainly do so. It would be a classic case of the decision to escalate in order to break a conventional military deadlock. No hard evidence of such a capability on either side exists, but it can be assumed that both is doing all it can to acquire nuclear weapons. The longer the war drags on, the more likely such an eventuality becomes. ▷

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Alternatively, while the promises of Arab states, like Egypt or Jordan, to aid Saddam if he gets into major difficulties need not be taken too seriously (except for air support), other powers may yet intervene more directly in the war. A degree of internationalisation, with Arab financial and US intelligence aid to Iraq, already exists. But although the USA and the USSR have abstained from direct involvement, though they are collaborating behind the scenes to prop up Iraq, there remains a possibility of substantial intervention by either if it feels its interests are threatened. At the moment this would most likely be on the side of Iraq, although dramatic diplomatic changes could occur later. Washington's threats to attack Iran in retaliation for US casualties in Lebanon at the hands of Iran-inspired Shi'ite militants may be a pretext for such an intervention on Iraq's side.

The Iran-Iraq war could go on for another 54 months with another huge death toll but without any decisive outcome. It may, however, be moving towards other, more dramatic, *dénouements*. It depends on what the new pathetic Khomeini has in mind and also on what an equally duplicitous Reagan is planning. □

AFGHANISTAN

WHAT THEY WERE REALLY UP TO

Claudia Wright uncovers new evidence of US foreign policy

PRESIDENT REAGAN accepted with relish last month a sweatshirt emblazoned with the words 'Make My Day' - the motto of the violent rogue film cop played by Clint Eastwood. No one should suppose that Mr Reagan's increasing deafness or the internal bleeding that his doctors have recently detected have produced an ideological softening in him. He has just said that he indends to squeeze the Nicaraguan government until it cries 'Uncle'.

Those, though, are rhetorical flourishes. There is one war in which the Reagan Administration is engaged — in Afghanistan. It is currently spending more than $250 million a year on it. Congress and public opinion have put limits on the violence the President has been able to do in Central America and the Middle East. But there is no comparable pressure restraint in Afghanistan — which is where the Reagan Administration would like to test the mettle of the new Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev.

But newly available US documents show that there has been no justification for American policy towards Afghanistan since the Russian invasion. This policy, pursued cautiously under the Carter Administration but with zeal by Reagan, has depended on four false claims about the Soviet role in Afghanistan:

● First, that the Soviets pulled all the strings in Afghan politics from the moment of the April 1978 revolution, when the regime of Mohammed Daoud was replaced by a coalition of the Khalq and Parcham factions of the proto-communist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA).

● Second that US officials were ignorant of the extent of Soviet influence and ambitions in

Camera Press

Babrak Karmal: brought back from exile

Afghanistan in 1978-79 and failed to anticipate the Soviet military intervention that accompanied the killing of Prime Minister Hafizullah Amin, after which the Parcham faction leader Barbrak Karmal was flown to Kabul and installed in government.

● Third that Soviet intervention and the overthrow of the Amin regime could have been forestalled, even prevented, if Washington had taken stronger measures to warn off Moscow. American 'softness' emboldened the Soviets, encouraged their brutal military tactics and betrayed the Afghans.

● Fourth, that the US should have recognised that the Kremlin's strategy was to liquidate all tribal and Islamic opposition and create in Afghanistan a springboard for the traditional Russian aim of having influence in the Gulf, posing a threat to American allies like Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Pakistan.

Each of these claims is contradicted by classified US documents recently obtained by the *New Statesman*. These include hundreds of pages of copies of cables between the State Department and the US Embassy in Kabul and reports by CIA officials, covering the climactic months of 1978 and 1979 before the massive Soviet airlift of troops into Afghanistan. The documents were taken from the US embassy in Tehran, pieced together and recently released by the Iranian government.

THE PICTURE that emerges is of well-informed US officials in Kabul confidently reporting the *inability* of the Soviets to control the faction-fighting within the Afghan government. In the cables from Kabul US officials record their understanding for the Soviet predicament and their shared dislike for the murderous Amin, as well as for the venal leaders of the Mujahadeen insurgent across the border in Pakistan. The Americans were confident that whatever the Soviets attempted would fail and lead to deeper involvement.

For several months in 1979 the US *chargé d'affairs* in Kabul, Bruce Amstutz, reported to Washington that despite the penetration of Soviet advisers throughout the Afghan government, Russians had been taken by surprise by the manoeuverings of the regime of President Taraki and Prime Minister Amin. They were 'unhappy', he reported, 'about factionalism in the party . . . distressed about the purging of the Parchamists [1978] . . . and not pleased about the recent dispute and purge within the top ranks of the party . . .' They reportedly found Taraki's promotion of a cult of personality 'offensive' and viewed Amin's ruthlessness in jailing and executing thousands of suspected opponents as damaging to the regime's chances of survival. After assessing several accounts of the incident in Kabul on 14 September, when there was a violent confrontation between Taraki and Amin (which resulted in Taraki's death and Amin taking over the presidency) Amstutz concluded that the Soviets had not manipulated the incident nor intended the result. In his judgment, the Soviets 'have no other choice at this time but to support the ambitious and ruthless Amin . . .'

The documents also reveal that the most reliable source of information for US officials was the Soviets themselves. The Soviet ambassador in Kabul, Alexander Puzanov, and Vasily Safronchuk, the key intermediary between the Kremlin and the Afghan leadership, gave the Americans a detailed assessment of the failures of the regime and an outline of their future strategy. Additional detail was supplied in unusually frank conversations by East German, Polish and Yugoslav officials.

Amstutz cabled Washington in July 1979 to report 'Moscow's efforts to find a political solution to this revolutionary regime's growing domestic difficulties'. He agreed with Safronchunk's assessment that 'the key ingredient (is) the departure of prime minister Hafizullah Amin', but told Washington that this 'may be unattainable'. Amin, he thought, was probably clever enough to outsmart the Russians.

The US *chargé* also told the State Department that Amin's regime of terror would force further Soviet intervention to remove him, if he could not be persuaded to relent. The same point, he reported, had also been made by Soviet and Eastern bloc officials in their conversations and corroborated by reports to Washington from other US embassies. Satellite and signals surveillance detected unusual Soviet troop movement on the Afghan border in September 1979; in addition, the CIA's contacts with Afghan officials and military provided a reliable count of the newly arriving Soviet advisors, helicopter pilots and combat troops, as well as of the weapons and ammunition that had been stockpiled in advance by mid-October to support a Soviet airborne division.

'Although it was clear in recent weeks that the Soviets would have preferred some type of political accommodation . . . there no longer appear to be any immediate prospects for success in that area,' Amstutz reported. His only uncertainty was in predicting who the Soviets might choose to replace Amin. One rumoured candidate, a former prime minister, was arrested and executed by Amin in a pre-emptive move. When Soviet and East German officials dropped the name of Babrak Karmal (in exile in Prague at the time), Amstutz reported it but didn't really consider him to be a

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serious candidate.

AS THE SIGNS of Soviet military preparations made the intervention of combat forces and a coup against Amin appear certain, State Department officials thought the result would 'fan the flames of the nationalistic opposition' and reinforce the US interest in an anti-Soviet outcome to the Afghan conflict in the long run. They saw Afghanistan as a quagmire — the end of the line for Soviet power, not a springboard for new threats to the Gulf.

In his 1983 memoirs, President Carter's National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski claims the personal credit for predicting the course of events in Kabul, though it properly belongs to the US embassy (and its Soviet informants). At the same time he attacks the State Department for its 'timid opposition' to the more active policy of US encouragment for the Afghan insurgents, for the clandestine supply line through Pakistan and China, and for the public warnings against Soviet intervention that Brzezinski advocated. In retrospect, he claims, 'had we conveyed our determination sooner, perhaps the Soviets would have desisted, and we might have avoided the later chain of events which ended with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the suspension of SALT [negotiations].'

As the cables in fact reveal, US officials must have left their Soviet counterparts with the feeling the US understood their predicament. But at no point was Washington prepared to pursue Soviet overtures further. Amstutz was instructed to listen, record, and say as little as possible to Afghan and Soviet officials. In Washington there was no interest in negotiating with Moscow to lower the level of potential confrontation. The only signal Brzezinski conveyed to Moscow was that the US was prepared to take as much advantage of Soviet vulnerability in Afghanistan as it could. The cables reveal that US officials pursued this advantage in contacts they had with the Saudis, the Chinese, the Pakistanis and even the Iranians, to whom they offered information on Soviet military movements in Kabul as the opening gambit in an 'intelligence dialogue' that was only cut short when the US embassy staff in Teheran were taken hostage.

Amin's violent unpredictability made the Soviet intervention of December 1979 inevitable, but Brzezinski's confrontational stance probably alterered its character. Instead of the single airborne division the Soviets had orginally been preparing to deploy, they flew in more than three divisions. The Soviet military commander in Kabul appears to have bungled the putsch against Amin so badly that even the shred of legality that might have been provided by the 1978 Soviet-Afghan treaty was destroyed by Amin's resistance to the invasion and his death. For Brzezinski, the outcome was 'an opportunity for (the president) to demonstrate his genuine toughness; to me, it was a vindication of my concern that the Soviets would be emboldened by our lack of response . . .'

Five years later the Reagan Administration is still at the same point. In 1984, according to Congressional officials, the Administration dramatically increased its spending on the Afghan insurgency. Although the exact figures are kept secret, it is estimated that at least $250 million were spent last year and that this year the total will be greater; the budget for 1986 calls for even more money for weapons, ammunition, and other supplies. The President's advisers and the members of the Congressional Task Force on Afghanistan concede that even at this level of US support, the insurgents cannot pose a serious military or political challenge to the Soviet forces or the Karmal regime in Kabul.

In this respect, the balance of military force has not been significantly changed in five years, although the costs in human life, Afghanistan's resources and military material have become enormous. It is not enough, the Reaganites insist, for the US to limit itself to keeping the Afghan Mujahadeen alive but not well-equipped enough to do real damage. They are demanding an increase in US spending so that the insurgents can achieve 'strategic victories' against the Soviets.

The Administration has already rebuffed several Soviet overtures for negotiations on Afghanistan. The Reaganites add that they are unimpressed with recent reports that Mikhail Gorbachev may directly threaten Pakistan, if the US continues to escalate its support of the Afghan insurgents. They believe that, if the US doesn't confront the Soviets in Afghanistan and *win*, Gorbachev will destabilize Pakistan anyway. They say: 'We may as well go after them now'. □

HARVEST APPEAL

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Without seed now there will be no harvest sown. Without tools there will be no defence against drought or floods and no harvest will be reaped.

Action and money **now** can sow the seeds to prevent future disaster. With the men and women of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Angola, Mauritania, Sudan, Senegal, Bangladesh and Zimbabwe, War on Want are working against time and famine. This Easter please help us to help them.
Your support **will** make the difference."

George Galloway
Director
for your Easter

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War on Want, Freepost,
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LETTERS

More dirty tricks

Dr Raymond Challinor, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear

Peter Kellner's fascinating article on the coal dispute (*NS* 22 March) showed what care the NCB took — expending £¼ on opinion surveys — to monitor the changes in miners' attitudes and to co-ordinate its anti-strike activities accordingly. But, he gave only half the picture.

The authorities have acknowledged the coal dispute was the biggest police operation of all time; it is significant they did not say 'except for the Special Branch.' It seems inconceivable that the government and NCB, seeking to glean whatever they could, did not use its services. Some information discovered as a result may have played a decisive part in defeating the NUM.

Clearly, one person who thinks so is the BBC industrial correspondent Nicholas Jones. He reported, from his almost daily contact with Arthur Scargill, how confident the miners' leader remained until the union suffered a hammer blow — its funds, which it thought were safely hidden abroad, were found by the sequestrators. In the *Listener* (24 January) Mr Jones suggests 'it was a tip-off from the security services that led Price Waterhouse to the bank accounts in Luxembourg and Switzerland. The level of surveillance by police Special Branch is one of the as yet untold stories of the miners' strike.'

In a broadcast made towards the end of the strike, Nicholas Jones hinted how thorough this happened to be. He reported that a senior Special Branch officer had asked him, next time he met the NUM leader, to inquire about Mr Scargill's health and about how many doctors he had consulted.

In the light of the controversy surrounding Miss Cathy Massiter's revelations, surely it is reasonable to call for information about the role of the Special Branch in the coal dispute. Many NUM activists say arrangements made only by telephone about demonstrations, picketing, etc., somehow mysteriously became known to the police. However, the big question is: did the government assist in the seizure of NUM assets by the violation of undertakings given to the European Court of Human Rights?

Carmen — a sanitised version?

Alan Seymour, London SE22

God save us from film critics with a theory. Francis Wheen (*NS* 15 March) theorises that *Carmen* is not about love but about misogyny. It is a perfectly respectable theory; I for one can agree with it. But when a distinguished director makes a film version of *Carmen* which does not happen to fit his theory Mr Wheen reaches for every scornful epithet in his repertoire. (Preposterously he even finds the routine and short-lived tieing-up of a prisoner an example of 'bondage', which tells us more about him that it does about *Carmen*.) A more objective critic might well have mentioned the misogyny theory and then reviewed the film.

More disturbing, however, is his comment (on the film *A Soldier's Story*) that its morality is 'confused' because the murdered man turns out to have been a right bastard, 'yet the Captain has no hesitation in arresting the murderer'. It is Mr Wheen whose morality is confused. His view comes ill from a democratic socialist journal with a long humane tradition. Will someone at the *NS* point out to Mr Wheen that one does not murder people because they are 'right bastards'; there are less extreme options, although as someone who only a few weeks ago told us approvingly of characters whose 'only' option was to kill, he may have difficulty in understanding this.

Smelling a rat

Patricia Dunker, Oxford

May I take Mr Mulhern up on his article on socialist feminist writing (*NS* 22 March)?

He refers to the life-style politics of feminists as 'small-scale achievements'. I beg to differ. Many of us do not look to a Utopian future — after the feminist socialist revolution — we live it now. Given the venomous and hostile opposition of men that is hardly a small achievement. The women I know who choose to live outside the bourgeois family, and without men, are an inspiration to me. And from that basis of sisterhood and strength, if not wealth, they commit themselves wholeheartedly to the 'collective public struggle' of the Rape Crisis Lines, The Women's Aid Refuges, anti-nuclear politics, Reclaim the Night campaigns.

Mr Mulhern looks to socialist feminists to shout down the radical feminists. Every woman should smell a rat when a man tells them they are doing a great job fighting their sisters, dividing their strength. Radical feminists are a threat to Mr Mulhern and his colleagues simply because they insist on the raw fact that it is men who batter, rape, abuse and exploit women. Men make the structures, produce and consume the pornography, benefit from their own system. He suggests that radical feminists seek 'parity in exploitation.' Who is he kidding? Men control the courts, the universities, the unions, all the public institutions, including the family. We are still fighting for our most basic freedoms. Radical feminists demand that men change their attitudes and their lives, that they should dismantle their own privileges. They show few signs of doing so.

Feminists are rightly suspicious of any vanguard, however constituted. One of the central principles of feminist theory and practice has been the denial of any structure of authority, cultural or otherwise.

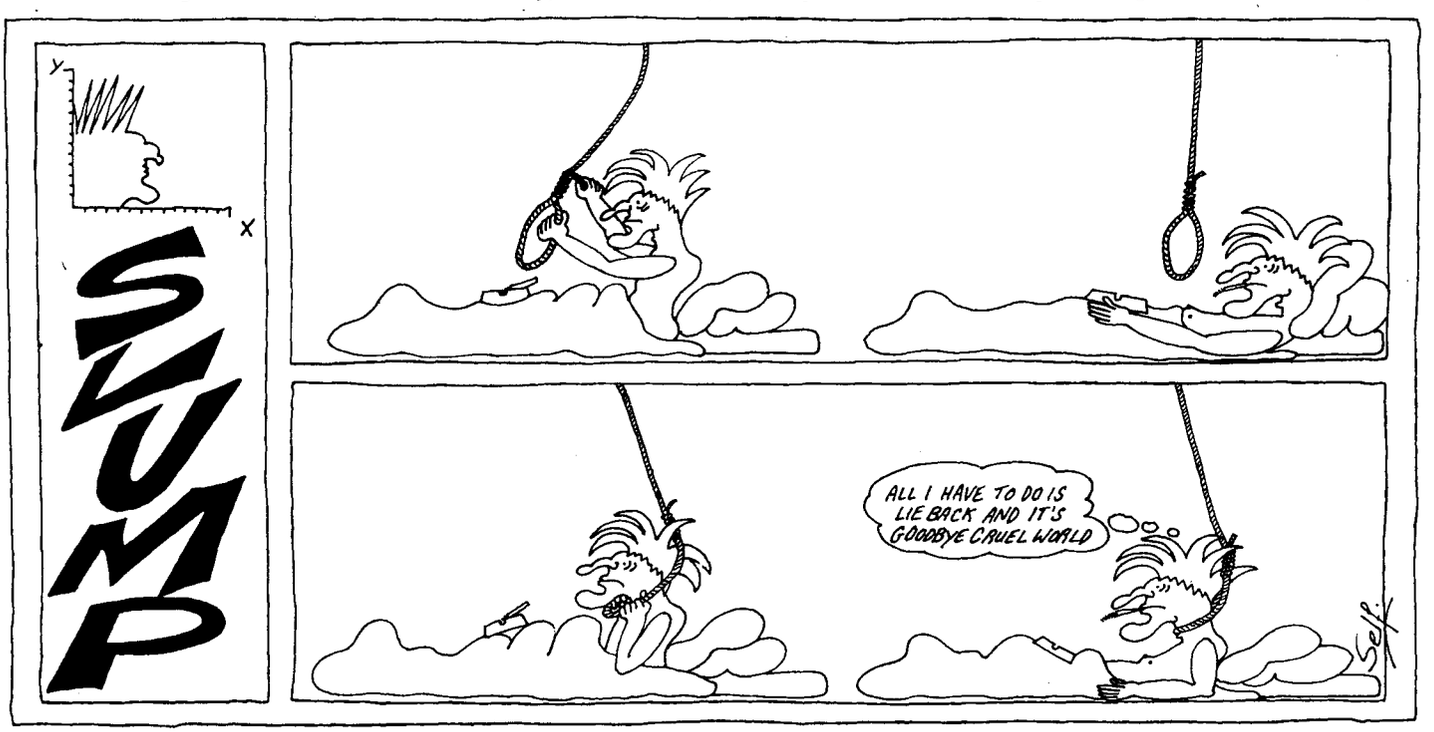
Mr Mulhern ticks off Le Guin and Piercy for lacking a coherent political programme and admonishes Walker for her interest in women's spirituality. The authoritarian and patronising tone of his comments on these three writers was neither informative nor useful.

Coren in the crossfire

Michael Coren, London WC1

Oh what fun it is to be attacked by all sides! Following my article on the relationship between Jews and Blacks in Britain (*NS* 15 March) David Rosenberg (Letters 29 March) implies that I am a right-wing propagandist, while Dr Jacob Gewirtz (Letters 22 March) accuses me of indulging in a PR exercise for the Trotskyist left.

Rosenberg first, who says I misquoted him. I have tape recordings and dated notes from my



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telephone interview with him. As to my analysis of the situation, Mr Rosenberg — a man who thought 'Black Moslems' were Pakistani and Bengali immigrants — is not the finest judge.

When speaking of myself Dr Gewirtz employs the phrases 'peddling of hate' and 'truth and logic on their head'. Although I respect Gewirtz's record of activities, his zealous commitment to the state of Israel and Zionism obscures the wider issue; unless there is an Arab on the scene, racism seems hardly to matter. The Jewish establishment has an appalling history of acquiescence to racism, dating back to opposing Jewish immigration at the turn of the century and failing to support those physically confronting Mosley in the 1930's.

If both extremes in this argument could see through their vitriol and prejudice, a little sense might shine through.

Annie Maguire and TLC

Michael Hill QC, London EC4

I have just seen the article 'Annie Maguire to be set free this Friday morning' (*NS* 22 February). There are certain passages in it which give a less than balanced and accurate account of the circumstances leading to and surrounding her conviction. As a consequence, I have obtained a copy of the transcript of the Court of Appeal's judgement, in which all the defendants' applications for leave to appeal against conviction were refused.

The applications for leave were fully argued before the Court of Appeal on eight days between 20 and 29 July 1977. All the applicants were represented by the counsel who had appeared for them at the trial (in Mrs Maguire's case, by Mr Q. T. Edwards QC and Mr R. P. Gray): the prosecution were required by the Court to be present to respond to the arguments. The judgment of the Court was given on Saturday 30 July 1977. I write this letter solely to correct the errors in the article, so that your readers may, themselves, be able to judge the criticisms of the convictions of Mrs Maguire. Thus:

1. It was incorrect to say that the traces of nitroglycerine found on any of the defendants or on Mrs Maguire's gloves 'were so minute that they were termed in evidence "invisible traces" — the equivalent of one-millionth of a grain of sugar'. The latter is an unfortunate misquotation from the evidence of Mr Elliott, one of the prosecution's expert witnesses, who said, about the TLC test in general: '. . . (it) does not reveal the quantity of nitroglycerine present, but. . . the test is sensitive enough to give a positive result for a trace as small as "a millionth of a grain of sugar".'
2. More serious than this misquotation is the implication that all Mrs Maguire and her co-defendants were convicted of was of having minute traces of nitro-glycerine on their hands or, in her case, on a pair or pairs of rubber gloves, of which, incidentally, she said that she was the sole user. The jury were very clearly directed that there were two issues for them to decide: first, had the prosecution proved that there were the alleged traces of nitro-glycerine; and, second, if so, had the prosecution proved that those traces were the results of knowingly handling quantities of the explosive?
3. In relation to the reliability of the TLC test for nitro-glycerine, the jury had available to it all the scientific evidence on both sides and had the opportunity of considering the manner in which each witness gave evidence and dealt with matters put in cross-examination. They knew that Dr Yallop, the principal defence expert witness, had not only developed the TLC test to detect nitro-glycerine but was on record as having said that a single test for each questioned substance was sufficient to be certain and had given evidence, previously, to that effect.

Dr Yallop said that he had had a change of heart about the single test, but quoted no recent text book to support him in this regard. He claimed to have shown that the TLC tests were equivocal. Attempts at the Woolwich laboratory to produce precisely the equivocal results spoken of by Dr Yallop had been unsuccessful in substantiating his claim. The 'results which could not be verified' were those claimed by Dr Yallop, *not* those asserted by the prosecution and upon which the convictions rested. The jury had evidence of tests carried out before and after the tests in the case, showing that Dr Yallop's invention of the TLC test for nitro-glycerine was, indeed, a sound and reliable test.

FEEDBACK

Zionism and black Britons

IT SURELY SHOULD not come as a surprise to discover, as Michael Coren evidently has (*NS* 15 March), that some Blacks are anti-semitic and some Jews are racist. It would be rather more remarkable if, in a society as permeated by prejudice as ours, either — or indeed any — group proved immune to racism. For in Mrs Thatcher's divided Britain the official endorsement of social, racial, political and economic distinction has engendered inevitable antagonisms and deepening suspicions. But, the predictability of social relations notwithstanding, most Jews are not actively racist and few Blacks are actively anti-semitic.

If there is no crisis in Black-Jewish relations, there are, as Michael Coren suggests, elements of strain. But they arise not from any clear conflict of interests, not out of cultural antipathy or even class competition; the source is neither Black nor Jewish. The problem lies in the politicisation of race. It is not so much race or class as dogma which is coming between Blacks and Jews. The Left, largely — though not exclusively — white and non-Jewish, is driving an ideological wedge between the communities. There may never have been, as there was in the United States, a 'Grand Alliance' between British Blacks and Jews. Nevertheless not so very long ago the two communities shared the same anti-racist struggle and enjoyed cordial and co-operative relations. Rampant anti-Zionism has not so far destroyed that understanding, but its impact has been damaging.

The arena for this ideological, artificial discord is not to be found in Brixton or Stamford Hill but far away in the Middle East. The far Left, has translated the fight against racism into an equation of 'oppression and liberation' by imposing on it an ideological and internationalist dimension which transforms the campaign for equal opportunities into a global, millennial struggle between the perpetrators of imperialism and their victims. Within these politics the Jews have been neatly segregated from the Blacks and corralled into a political ghetto all of their own. It is a simple formula: Blacks are oppressed, Zionists are oppressors, Jews are Zionists. Even if the final equation — that Jews oppress Blacks — remains more often than not unexpressed, the inference is there to be drawn.

The recent Black People's Solidarity with the Miners rally at County Hall provides disturbing evidence of this trend. Sharing the platform with the leader of the Kent miners were representitives of Sinn Fein and the PLO. Speaker after speaker inveighed not only against the inherent injustices of British society, but also against international capitalism, imperialism and Zionism, all of which are held to be apparently in equal measure responsible for the oppression of the miners, British Blacks, Irish Republicans and Palestinian refugees.

While it may well be that British Blacks feel a natural affinity for Palestinian Arabs, there is no real reason why this sympathy should sour their regard either for Jews or indeed for Zionists. While the white societies of the West resolutely bar their doors against Black immigration, Israel send out envoys to gather in its exiles from centuries of persecution and poverty in Ethiopia; surely this is worthy of some grudging token of acknowledgement.

It should cause black anti-Zionists to reconsider the Zionism-and-racism formula and indeed contemplate again the real meaning and significance of Zionism for the Jewish people — a meaning with which they should perhaps have a special sympathy. For Jews, Zionism is *their* liberation and redemption from disadvantage and dispossession, its realisation is *their* security against prejudice, intolerance and uncertainty and the fulfilment of *their* yearning for a homeland in which they may be free to express their cultural, spiritual and political identity. Just as the Palestinians and Irish Republicans and black Britons in their own ways wish these things, so do the Zionists; just as the Zionists, be they the prisoners of the USSR or the hostages of Syria devoutly wish these things so do the Palestinians of Kuwait, Lebanon and Gaza.

Socialists do not, as left-wing anti-Zionists often imply, have to choose between Jews and Palestinians; socialists should choose both, as they must choose to support all victims of persecution and injustice. This is as true for Zionist socialists as it is for Palestinian socialists, black socialists, white socialists. It was a socialist Zionist of the nineteenth century, Aaron Lieberman, who acknowledged that 'we Jews are an integral part of humanity and cannot be liberated except through the liberation of humanity'.

It is to Lieberman's and indeed to Martin Luther King's inspirational humanism and not to the manipulative cynicism of the race ideologists that we should be looking for guidance. But those of us on the Left should also remember that it is as socialists and not as Jews or Blacks that we have special responsibilities. The speculative calibration of Black and Jewish attitudes to each other is as politically invidious as it is factually misleading.

There is, however, an important lesson to be learned by Blacks from the Jewish experience of some sections of the British Left. Not so very many years ago, it was the radical socialists who set themselves up as the champions of Jewish rights and causes, in the vanguard of the struggle against anti-semitism, even in the campaign for a Jewish homeland. The political climate has since changed and the Left has dumped the Jews — hard. It is by no means beyond doubt that some of those who are currently making political mileage out of their support for black rights will one day soon drop the Blacks — hard.

Peter Bradley

Peter Bradley is a national executive committee member of Poale Zion, a Jewish socialist society affiliated to the Labour Party.

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Weekend

AFRICAN LINKS

American Blacks are now linking South Africa's liberation struggle to US civil rights and trade union movements. Can this new alliance hold, asks MANNING MARABLE?

IN LATE 1984, two separate events occurred on opposite sides of the globe which culminated in the most dramatic and unexpected social movement in recent US history. Last September, approximately 50,000 mineworkers went on strike inside South Africa. Mobilising millions of nonwhites, the United Democratic Front, a multiracial coalition of more than 600 groups, initiated a series of protest actions. Tensions peaked on 5-6 November, when one million workers staged a general strike. The apartheid regime responded in the only language it comprehends. Almost 200 people were murdered, several thousand were detained without charges, and roughly 6,000 labourers were dismissed from their jobs.

On 6 November in the US, Ronald Reagan was re-elected to a second term in office by an historic 'mandate'. As in the struggles inside South Africa, the dimension of race was crucial in the national political culture. Approximately 66 per cent of all white voters endorsed Reagan, compared to barely 10 per cent of the Black electorate. Reagan received key support from white Southerners (72 per cent), 'born-again' white Christians (80 per cent) and whites with annual incomes above $50,000 (68 per cent).

One important factor contributing to Blacks' hostility towards the Reagan Administration was its record of close co-operation with apartheid. During his 1984 presidential campaign, civil rights leader Jesse Jackson repeatedly attacked the President's policy of 'constructive engagement' with Pretoria — the decisions to back IMF loans to South Africa, the US training of the South African Coast Guard, the sending of 2,500 electric shock batons to apartheid's police force, and the establishment of offices in Johannesburg designed to stimulate US investment in the country.

Jackson's emphasis on South Africa forced the Democratic Party's 1984 platform to include a call for the immediate release of African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela, and the freeing of 'all other political prisoners in South Africa.' This was the *first* time that any major US party has denounced apartheid unconditionally.

Given Reagan's fresh electoral victory, it seemed probable that the Administration would do absolutely nothing to pressure Pretoria over the next four years. Similarly on domestic issues, the Administration was likely to escalate its attacks on civil rights legislation, public housing, and social services essential to the Black community. Activists felt that some form of aggressive protest was necessary to restore the momentum from the Jackson campaign, as well as to provide active solidarity to the militants inside South Africa.

Jesse Jackson and sons outside the South African embassy; a return to the links with Black Africa in 1985

AP

The prime architect of the Free South Africa Movement (FSAM) was Randall Robinson, executive director of Transafrica, a lobbying agency based in Washington, DC. Robinson and two other supporters of last year's Jackson campaign, Civil Rights Commissioner Mary Frances Berry and Black Congressman Walter Fauntroy, decided to hold a non-violent protest at the South African Embassy on 21 November. The choice of 'non-violent' tactics was inevitable: Fauntroy had been a close associate of Dr Martin Luther King Jr, and was the co-ordinator of the 1983 March on Washington. The three leaders obtained an interview with the South African ambassador and upon their arrival announced their intention not to leave the building. Embassy officials panicked and called police; the three were 'pleasantly surprised' when they were arrested for trespassing.

Within several days, other members of the Congressional Black Caucus held non-violent demonstrations in front of the South African Embassy and were arrested. Rosa Parks, the initiator of the famous 1955 Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott movement, and the Reverend Joseph Lowery, leader of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, soon followed. In weeks, the FSAM began to acquire national dimensions. Virtually all of the leaders of Jackson's 'Rainbow Coalition', plus many other liberals who had supported either Walter Mondale or Gary Hart for the Democratic nomination, volunteered to be among those arrested.

Even groups which had vigorously opposed Jackson's candidacy found it difficult to disagree with the new movement. Initially a few Orthodox and Conservative Jewish groups refused to join the protests, primarily because of Israel's extensive economic and political links with the apartheid regime. But within two weeks, virtually all of the major Jewish organisations, including leaders of the American Jewish Congress and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, had taken part in the demonstrations. Even 'celebrities' got involved: among those arrested were two children of the late Senator Robert F. Kennedy, tennis star Arthur Ashe, actor Harry Belafonte, and recording artist Stevie Wonder — who chose to accept his Oscar award last week in the name of Nelson Mandela, and promptly got his music banned in South Africa.

Most of the media coverage focused on the Washington DC and New York City demonstrations, but thousands of Blacks and progressive whites initiated actions in other cities as well. On 6 December, Fauntroy and Lowery led several hundred demonstrators in a 'pray-in' protest at the

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home of the honorary South African consul in Mobile, Alabama. The next day, in Berkeley, California, one thousand students staged an anti-apartheid rally, blockading the central administration building for three hours, resulting in 38 arrests. Simultaneously in Cleveland, Ohio, over 200 trade unionists, religious leaders and civil rights activists held a public demonstration. On 9 December, four hundred demonstrators in Seattle, Washington, picketed the home of the honorary consul, leading to 23 arrests.

Since virtually all of the protests involved civil disobedience, and occurred without physical confrontations with police, most of the religious community quickly lined up behind the FSAM at both local and national levels. Religious supporters included the United Church of Christ Board of World Ministries, the National Association of American Nuns, the American Muslim Mission, and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. Conservative evangelicals were left in the cold. The Reverend Jerry Falwell fumed that 'if we aren't (in South Africa), the Soviets will take over.' But few leading clergy were listening.

AS THE PROTESTS increased, the Reagan Administration first tried to minimise their significance, announcing that they would have absolutely 'no impact' on Reagan's approach of constructive engagement' with South Africa. 'The real losers in this are the Black community,' blurted one White House official to the press. But sensing a sudden shift in public opinion, most members of Congress and local elected officials sided with the FSAM.

At local levels, FSAM supporters in 44 state legislatures introduced legislation demanding disinvestment of public funds from banks with ties to South Africa. The National Conference of Black Mayors, which includes over 300 cities, voiced support for public disinvestment. In a widely publicised visit to South Africa, Senator Edward Kennedy expressed sharp opposition to the Botha government's repression of trade unionists and leaders of the United Democratic Front. Although criticised in the US press for attempting to gain political leverage for his anticipated presidential campaign in 1988, Kennedy nevertheless was able to focus international attention on human rights violations in South Africa.

By mid-March, over 2,000 arrests had taken place, with the total number of protestors exceeding half a million nationwide. The media has tended to give low coverage to the demonstrations, however, and has focused attention on the issue of disinvestment. US investment inside South Africa, $15 billion in 1984, totals 20 per cent of all foreign direct

Popperfoto

Martin Luther and Coretta King in 1963, when the issue was 'bourgeois' civil rights

investment in South Africa. US corporations control 70 per cent of the South African computer market, and an IBM computer helps run the stock exchange in Johannesburg. As of 1983, Mobil Oil had $426 million invested in South Africa, and a workforce of 3,577; General Motors, $243 million and 5,038 employees; Union Carbide, $54.5 million and 2,465 employees. American banks, led by Chase Manhattan, Bankers Trust, Chemical and Manufacturers Hanover, had outstanding loans in South Africa totalling nearly $4 billion in 1984.

The press has seized any Black figure it can find in recent weeks who advances the thesis that US investment, under 'liberal guidelines,' may actually promote a peaceful, democratic transition inside South Africa. The Reverend Leon Sullivan of Philadelphia, for example, has authored the 'Sullivan Principles,' which advocate continued US corporate expansion in South Africa with provisions for desegregated workplace facilities, mandatory equal pay for jobs, and the training of non-whites in administrative and supervisory positions. In early February, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, leader of South Africa's six million Zulus, met with President Reagan and strongly supported the Administration's opposition to economic sanctions.

The difficulties of these postures of accommodation by both Sullivan and Buthelezi are relatively simple to illustrate. First, as Free South Africa Movement leaders have noted, only 66,000 members of South Africa's six million labour force are employed by US firms which have signed the 'Sullivan Principles'. But even according to Sullivan's own annual reports, progress along such lines is at best marginal. In the 1983 report, it was noted that white employees filled 94 per cent of all new managerial posts, and that non-white workers had 'lost ground steadily in clerical-administrative programs over the last three years.'

Secondly, a vital if problematic link, there is the negative impact of US corporate investment inside South Africa upon the American working class. The chief economic characteristic of apartheid is that rigid racial stratification of the labour force lowers the wage rate.

HOW DOES THIS investment affect American workers? Researchers for the Washington Office on Africa and the Civil Rights Department of the United Steelworkers of America recently prepared a brief study on this issue. Between 1974 and 1982 domestic steel production declined by 50 per cent. In 1983, the seven largest steel producers reported losses of $2.7 billion that year alone. Major industrial towns dependent upon steel productivity to generate jobs have had staggeringly high rates of joblessness. Simultaneously, the US steel industry has siphoned off domestic profits and reinvested them in Third World nations where authoritarian regimes guarantee a low wage and non-unionised labour force. Imports from foreign nations producing steel now exceed one fifth of the domestic market. And since 1975, US imports of apartheid's steel have increased by 5,000 per cent.

South African steel is largely produced by a state-owned firm, the Iron and Steel Corporation (ISCOR). All of the major US companies which have experienced difficulties producing steel at home — ARMCO, Allegheny Ludlum, US Steel, Phelps Dodge, and others — have invested millions into apartheid's industries. Recently, Chicago's Southworks steel plant, owned by US Steel, laid off several thousand workers, on the rationale that US workers weren't sufficiently productive and that the plant wasn't making profits. Then local steel workers learned that the steel beams used to build a new state office

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building in Chicago had been imported from South Africa — despite the fact that Southworks produces the identical steel beams. Even more outrageous was the fact that Continental Illinois Bank has loaned money to ISCOR, which had produced these beams. In short, Chicago labourers were giving their hard-earned wages to a local bank, which in turn financed a competitor which was stealing their jobs!

For these economic reasons, the conservative AFL-CIO has broken with tradition by vigorously supporting the FSAM. Thomas R. Donahue, secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO, Charles A. Perlik, president of the Newspaper Guild, Leon Lynch, vice president of the United Steelworkers, and Joslyn Williams, president of the Washington DC Central Labor Council, were among those arrested in Washington DC.

Workers in San Francisco made perhaps the most militant contribution to the FSAM. On 26 November last year, longshoremen in that city refused to unload cargo which had originated in South Africa. After nearly a two week stalemate, a court injunction forced them to unload the cargo. Longshoreman Leo Robinson explained to the press that workers comprehended the connections between trade union struggles in South Africa and in the US. 'The shipping interests,' he said, force us 'to unload cargo such as steel and auto glass, made by slave labour at non-union wages. It has meant that we unload steel from South Africa, which means that steel workers here lose their jobs.' Robinson added, 'Our conscience makes us rise above such laws. It's a matter of conscience, with us, and of thinking about our brothers and sisters in apartheid-run South Africa.'

ONE MUST NOT minimise the fragility of such a united front which has attempted to link international and domestic agendas. Moderate elements within the FSAM have become increasingly uncomfortable with the spontaneous, mass dimensions of the mobilisation. Some problems can be traced to Robinson's selections on the FSAM Steering Committee. Some Committee members chosen — notably NAACP leader Benjamin Hooks — have little knowledge of the anti-apartheid movement or the issues at stake. Others who were left off the Committee, such as Black militant Jean Sindab of the Washington Office on Africa, might have strengthened the activist tendencies of the protests. Some Marxists and Black nationalists question the value of peaceful, almost passive protests, noting that lists of each day's demonstrators are regularly provided to the Washington DC police. Arrests are made with the agreement that the acts of civil disobedience are purely symbolic, and that all criminal charges are to be dropped by authorities.

Probably the major weakness of such a social movement is found in its historical and theoretical orientation. Although many Black Americans in earlier generations retained a strong sense of cultural and social identity with Africa, during most of the twentieth century such expressions of solidarity were muted. The principal political contradiction confronting Afro-Americans was produced by the rise of racial segregation. Blacks were denied the right to vote, were refused employment or service in public establishments, and were forcibly removed from white neighbourhoods. Over five thousand Black Americans were lynched between 1882 and 1927, and many publicly burned. The new racial codes segregated all sports facilities, restaurants, buses and trains. Birmingham, Alabama even outlawed Blacks and whites from playing checkers or dominoes together.

Facing the reaction against racial equality, most Black American leaders now advocated a political philosophy of civil rights and integration. Blacks were 'fully American', and as such, should be extended basic civil liberties and rights shared by whites. Any connection with Africa was deliberately ignored or forgotten. Gradually, by the 1950s, most Black Americans knew little about Africa's history or its people.

Yet the links between Africa and Afro-Americans did not disappear entirely during these years. W E B Du Bois, noted civil rights leader, sponsored an important series of political conferences which brought together West Indians, Black Americans and Africans between 1900 and 1945. In increasing numbers, African intellectuals came to the US and took part in desegregation campaigns. Nhamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria and Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana both attended all-Black Lincoln University in Pennsylvania. Their respective rise to power in the 1950s was covered extensively in Black American newspapers, and the achievement of African independence captured the imaginations of US Blacks.

After African independence, connections across the Atlantic deepened in both symbolic and concrete ways. In downtown Dar-es-Salaam and in Nairobi, major streets were named in honour of Du Bois, the 'father of Pan-Africanism'. In South Africa, young Black leaders such as the late Steve Biko developed their 'Black Consciousness' movement against apartheid by drawing upon the rhetoric and tactics of the 'Black Power' movement of the 1960s. Black American students and tourists in increasing numbers began to make pilgrimages to their 'homeland'; US Black cultural fashions and hairstyles began consciously to imitate African patterns.

Ironically, it was only with the achievement of desegregation and the granting of democratic political rights in the 1960s that Black Americans could fully revive their political and cultural relations with Africa. Black mayors and elected officials began to use their offices to develop closer economic and civic ties with their African counterparts. Black members of Congress lobbied for increased US aid to support Africa's development, and pressured administrations to halt economic and political support for apartheid.

Yet this renewed interest in Africa obscured the fundamental differences between national liberation struggles and racial reforms within a bourgeois democracy. There was, and still exists, a tendency to view the events in South Africa through the prism of the civil rights and Southern desegregation experience: thus many protestors today carry signs stating that 'the Ku Klux Klan is in power' in South Africa. Tactics developed to fit a particular conjuncture of political and social forces in the early 1960s are therefore revived in an uncritical fashion, without efforts to encourage political education among the masses of protestors on the political economy of apartheid. Pragmatically, the campaign has succeeded in mobilising an eclectic array of constituencies around an important public policy issue, but it is exceedingly problematic whether this unity, lacking deep roots, can be maintained beyond the next 12 months.

There are, fortunately, some signs that the FSAM has gained results. Manufacturers Hanover Bank recently announced its refusal to grant any loans to the South African government or to sell its Kruggerrand gold coins unless it initiates steps to 'generate improved circumstances for the whole population' of South Africa. A total of 40 American universities have disinvested over $175 million in stocks linked to South Africa. This Thursday, 4 April, hundreds of thousands of US students plan to stage simultaneous protests against apartheid. And on 20 April, thousands of Americans will protest in Washington DC, calling for the destruction of the South African regime, as well as opposition to US intervention in Central America.

President Reagan may have received a sweeping electoral victory last year, yet it is clear that the progressive spectrum of American politics has taken away his 'mandate'. The issue of apartheid has reinforced democratic social protest in both domestic and international arenas — and promises to remain a major concern of US political life. □

Dr Manning Marable is professor of political sociology, and Director of the Africana and Hispanic Studies Program, Colgate University, Hamilton, New York.

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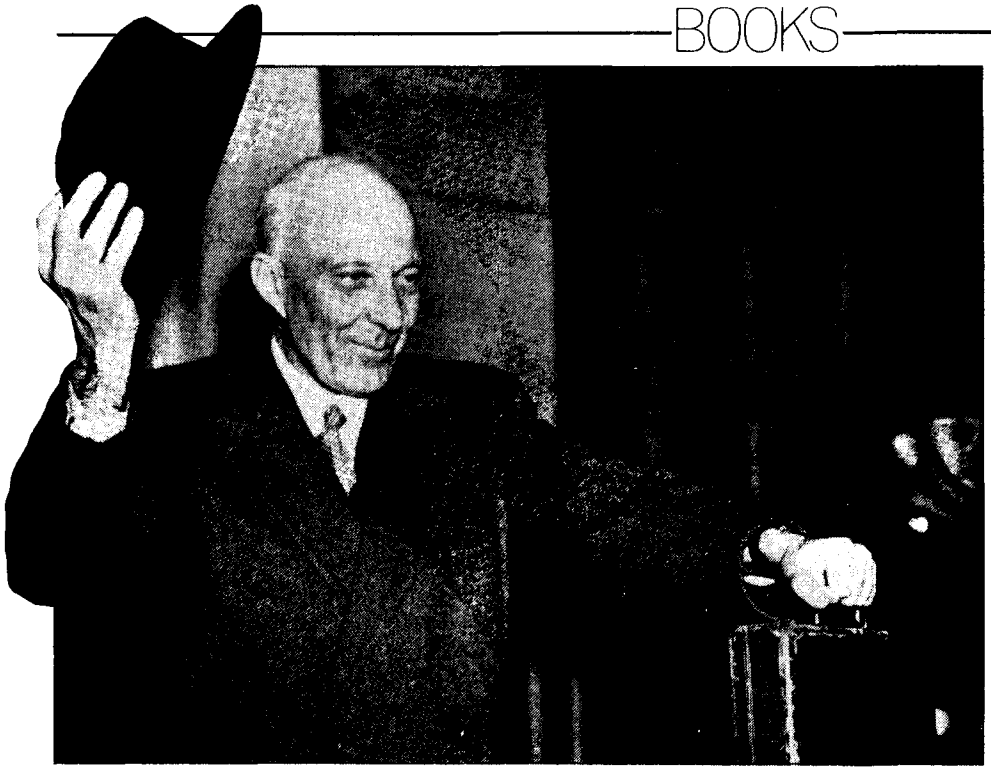

Minister the Tories loved to hate: Dalton with dispatch box

Old school tribune

Bernard Crick

Hugh Dalton
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HOW INADEQUATE are general theories to explain how individuals form their political allegiances. Deviant indeed were the first steps of the ladder by which the Etonian son of a royal chaplain and tutor became, second only to Bevan, the Labour Minister whom Tories most loved to hate in Attlee's Government; and thus gained, for a while, the enthusiastic support of the Left and the constituency parties in the NEC elections — who otherwise would not have been impressed by his relatively cautious (for all his booming rhetoric) economic policies. These policies were proto-Gaitskellite indeed, for Gaitskell was his find, his young man, his protégé, though just as ambitious as his mentor and wholly unaffected by Dalton's own devious, compulsive and hearty fence-sitting between Left and Right.

He went to King's College, Cambridge, in 1906, came under the influence of Lowes Dickinson and was a friend of Rupert Brooke and Ben Keeling. Keeling, who also died in the Great War, brought them into the Cambridge Fabians who enjoyed being 'slightly bohemian', 'rather shocking' and even more superior than the Bloods and the Sports. But they sought also, vaguely but passionately, and of course very sensitively, for 'higher principles'.

Keeling was a disciple of Edward Carpenter who had not merely espoused the cause of the common people, but had actually gone and lived among them for good in Sheffield; and who had denounced the family and praised the friendship of beautiful youths, but lived with a Sheffield barman and wrote about his idyll in a flowery, high-minded, but guarded way. Most likely Dalton, Pimlott thinks, never moved beyond homoerotic literature and intense Platonic friendship. He was probably a rather under-sexed man, a classic case of a lust for power sublimating the sexual drive; but all this very much explains his later habits of encouraging the young, of being demanding comic father or wicked uncle to a small pack of chosen souls, the gifted and the comely — such as Gaitskell and Crosland — and patronising helpfully, if at a greater social distance, promising young workers like Callaghan, J., and Brown, G.; but of having no intimates in his own age group. This also accounts for some very conflicting but precise assessments of him. The late Professor G.C. Allen, who worked with him during the war, said he was 'vain, arrogant and without any understanding of how to handle men'. But junior officials found him 'friendly and approachable'; indeed he enraged their chiefs by taking young men of talent out to expensive lunches and demanding their 'real opinion'. Attlee grumbled to his Private Secretary that Dalton was 'an intriguer', but was willing to admit that he 'encouraged the young'. But the old Cambridge cult of beautiful friendship in a common cause could always degenerate into vanity, mutual back-scratching and terrible pouts and depressions when the young reached 40 and acted for themselves.

But, in all, what a ripe character! Truly despicable though his ruthless ambition was and his cruel neglect of his wife and young daughter, yet the eccentric vitality of the old rogue elephant makes so much more entertaining a subject for the biographer, not just the historian, than Philip Williams's Gaitskell, Donoughue and Jones's Morrison or even Bullock's Bevin — the other big biographies that tell us most about how that great but flawed post-war Labour Government came to be and what it did. And Pimlott proves himself a very fine biographer and writer as well as a trustworthy and obsessionally thorough historian. 'Dalton is one of the relatively few contemporary politicians', he quotes Muggeridge, 'with a well-defined personality. He is a card.'

The two sides of Dalton appear clearly in the tale of his only actual meeting with Edward Carpenter when Dalton was 13 years out from Cambridge. His father wanted him to meet his own old friend. Hugh probably went along out of curiosity as well as to please his father by appearing as the heterodox socialist son; but the old sage's socialist sanctuary of Millthorpe lay within the boundaries of the Chesterfield constituency.

> Hugh, who spent much of the same week at the Labour Party conference discussing with leading Derbyshire miners how best to ease out the sitting Labour M.P. for Chesterfield in order to gain the candidature for himself, must have been hoping that Carpenter might provide contacts or exercise influence.

Motives cannot be documented, but the inference seems reasonable.

The seat he in fact found was Bishop Auckland. It was a safe Labour seat of the good old kind, from a Member's point of view. He did not have to go there much. Sometimes a year went by without a meeting of the GMC. In County Durham it was local politics that counted. 'I don't want a big party,' he told a local officer, 'too many members might upset the apple-cart and bring in militants.' It left him plenty of time to pursue his two careers in the 1930s, as MP and as a distinguished economist teaching at the LSE. Keynes had taught him at

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Cambridge and regarded him as second-rate. Dalton proved his independence from Keynes by siding with Robbins in the great economists' civil war of 1930 around the Government Economic Advisory Council when Keynes repudiated free trade.

I have mostly tried to relay what Pimlott has to say about Dalton's formative years. The pattern was set early and only in that light can his later seeming-triumphs and seeming-failures be understood. Most reviews so far have concentrated on the period of the post-war Labour Government and, while they have rightly heaped praises on Ben Pimlott as historian and biographer, they have not actually shown how specific is his biographical skill nor how much the character of the man shaped the career. 'Would anything have been different without him?' is, in fact, a dismissive question; one on which very few subjects indeed could pass the test. What is interesting about Dalton is how he related to the Labour movement. He was if not quite the last, certainly the greatest of the old patricians turned tribunes who moved from Right to Left. The social deference in Labour Party activists that was the basis of this has now gone for ever, and so has the patrician class confidence. The modern Philip Egalite needs the voice of God or of History breathing in his ear, not reselection down his neck. How we loved to hate or hated to love those dying mastodons.

Ben Pimlott has written a great study of a great character but has also shown that he is enviably well equipped to go on to hunt the biggest game of all, a true history of the Labour Party. □

Among this week's contributors:

GRACE INGOLDBY's first novel, *Across the Water*, has just been published by Michael Joseph.

MICHAEL LEAPMAN is the author of *Barefaced Cheek: Rupert Murdoch* published by Hodder/Coronet.

JONATHAN FALLA's *Topokana Martyrs Day* won him 'Most Promising Playwright' award for 1983.

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Before I Go: Reflections on my Life and Times

MARY STOTT *Virago* £9.95 & £4.50

'SOME OF my known and unknown friends, mostly those set in positive political convictions, will think — quite affectionately I hope — that I am naive or "wet",' Mary Stott warns in the Foreword to her second volume of memoirs. Well, yes, one is tempted to agree, having just turned the page and a half of first names, Alison to Zoe, Andrew to Ron, to whom the book is dedicated. Sentimental, too. . .

But no one could fault Ms Stott for not having done her share of the hard fighting for good causes, most especially women's causes. In the first two chapters of *Before I Go* she blows her own trumpet in a modest, interesting way, describing the committees and pressure-groups with which she has been involved, much as a regiment might catalogue its battle honours: everything from the Fawcett Society to the National Association of Widows.

For those two reasons, her obvious niceness and the work she has done for women, it would be ungrateful and ungracious in the reviewer to cavil at the superficiality of her thinking. But cavil one must — for example when she says that 'One reason why I am in the SDP is that it has an "anti-class" image.' This can only be wishful thinking on the part of the SDP whose appeal, or so it seems to me, is almost entirely to the *nouvelle*, still a little conscientious, *bourgeoisie*.

Again, one wants to cavil when she quite rightly deplores the smear campaign of the gutter press against Peter Tatchell's candidacy in the Bermondsey by-election, but goes on, as if it were a comparable case, to slate Vincent Hanna for making Tony Cooke, the failed SDP candidate for Darlington in 1983, look like a fool by means of informed interviewing:

> Perhaps Tony Cooke might not have won the seat in any case. Perhaps he did not deserve to win it and the SDP should have taken care to select a tougher and more adroit candidate. But it is worth bearing in mind that Mr Hanna is known in the National Union of Journalists as a convinced left-winger. Can he honestly claim that he would have pinpointed the weak places in the armoury of a novice *left-wing* Labour candidate in the same fashion?

That begs the question: Vincent Hanna did the electorate a good turn, surely, by exposing Mr Cooke's ineptitude and the SDP's incontinent haste.

It begs the question too to suggest as Mary Stott does here that 'the sharpest divisions in our society are cultural rather than financial and. . . the great area of underprivilege is education'. Understaffed and ill-equipped schools are both symptom and cause of inadequate education: educational under-privilege is cultural deprivation writ small.

Strange, even paradoxical, that a woman who has fought the good fight for so long should seem to argue for the sort of domestic pacifism, the lowered expectation, that has kept women down since the world began. On the subject of feminists' claim to the right to have orgasms, for example, she declares without a shred of evidence that 'it is probable that generations of married women scarcely ever, if indeed ever, experienced orgasm' and concludes her paragraph with 'I do wonder. . . how much the bliss of the orgasm has added to human happiness.' For my own part, I wonder how many women lived under the stigma of neuroticism because they were constantly being abandoned on the brink of orgasm.

On the subject of lesbianism — 'I can understand, and indeed, share a distaste for the idea of being personally involved in a lesbian relationship, just as some of us have a distaste for heterosexual relationships' — she is remarkably insensitive:

> There never has been any legal basis for discrimination against lesbians, and I should have thought that their best tactic by far would be to go their way without fuss or fervour except in the comparatively rare cases of overt discrimination, as in the case of lesbian mothers being refused custody of their children.

In other words, shut up and sit down until you have a genuine grievance. . . but of course, unless the public attitude is changed, what chance will those lesbian mothers stand in court? Is there a moral distinction worth drawing between covert discrimination against women or blacks, and covert discrimination against lesbians?

But there are a number of good things in this book too: the genuine and justified complaint that the complex language of feminist writings renders them inaccessible to the very people who most need to read them; the failure of socialism to measure up to its early, crusading ideals and the way it has dwindled into power-politicking; the sad and short-sighted decline of the co-operative movement — not enough, though, to compensate for the blind spots and the occasional self-indulgent strolls down memory lane. □

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The Power of the Press?
LOUIS HEREN *Orbis* £10

RECEIVED OPINION has it that the British press has deteriorated disgracefully over the last two decades, under the malign influence of Rupert Murdoch and, more recently, Robert Maxwell. The Left complain that Fleet Street's nearly unanimous and increasingly strident hostility to socialism so distorts the political debate that it presents a formidable obstacle to the election of a Labour government.

The defeat of the miners is ascribed by their supporters to loaded press coverage. If the Labour councils lose their fight against rate-capping, the media will be blamed.

The press barons, it is argued, egg on Mrs Thatcher as she grinds the faces of the working class. The populace are unaware of what is happening because the papers they buy restrict their intellectual diet to lies, pap, nudes and Bingo.

Yet spasmodic initiatives to launch a paper more sympathetic to the Left come to naught because of two uncomfortable facts: that its projected readership cannot be made attractive enough — in terms of numbers or wealth — to potential advertisers; and that it could not make a profit simply on its cover price because of high production costs imposed by unions defending their members' jobs. The unsullied truth may not be a marketable commodity in a competitive economic system.

In his engaging, fast-paced and often perceptive analysis of whether the press can really exercise the power claimed for it, Louis Heren plays down the element of electoral advantage for the Tories in the capitalist ownership of newspapers. He relies on the argument that from 1945 to the mid-Seventies Labour was in power for as long as the Conservatives, and that since then television has played a much more important role than the written word in election campaigns.

Heren believes that newspapers in Britain and the United States exercise such power as they have chiefly by printing news that the authorities and other vested interests would prefer not to be made public. He makes much of Watergate, the thalidomide scandal and the leak of the Pentagon Papers to the *New York Times*, tracing these modern investigative triumphs back to the campaigns of Pulitzer and Lincoln Steffens in America, Delane and Stead in England.

That is the kind of reporting that changes history, he asserts. On the other hand leading articles — expressing the principles, prejudices and self-interest of proprietors and editors — can seldom be shown to have exerted much more than a marginal effect on the actions of governments.

Although, over the last two centuries, press barons have often harboured dreams of supreme power and influence, none has fulfilled them. William Randolph Hearst did manage to fuel a little war between America and Spain over Cuba, but his political career was a failure, as was that of Horace Greeley, the self-regarding editor of the New York *Tribune*.

In England, Northcliffe, Rothermere and Beaverbrook all tried in vain to impose their often eccentric views on governments. Heren also writes off Rupert Murdoch as a man of political significance in Britain, despite the knighthood Mrs Thatcher awarded to the editor of the *Sun* for services rendered.

Absent from the book, though, is consideration of what happens when news and opinion get mixed, as increasingly occurs in the papers Murdoch and Maxwell own. When Heren worked for *The Times* the line between news and comment was for the most part clearly drawn. Today its news pages are coloured by editorial policy.

Take its current campaign against the BBC — motivated, some suggest, by Murdoch's desire to get his large hands on a piece of the broadcasting action if the Beeb should be stripped of its component parts. In editorial after editorial, the paper has attacked the BBC and suggested such a break-up.

With the Government already committed to taking a critical look at the Corporation's future, the editorials could have had no decisive influence. But they have been accompanied by a series of news reports, some cobbled from the thinnest material, suggesting extravagance and incompetence in the BBC's management.

Contd. on p.30

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'BBC condemned as licence monster', shouted one recent headline over a story that turned out to be a report of an article by an obscure former BBC employee in a still more obscure trade journal. Such items are calculated to condition the climate in which any decision about the BBC will be taken and could be more effective in that respect than editorials. Certainly they are far removed from the aggressive investigative reporting that Heren admires.

His view of the press is a romantic and comforting one — comforting to him, at any rate. While he shows that attempts by malevolent proprietors to accrue power and influence through their newspapers invariably fail, those braver souls who charge in on white horses to root out corruption are frequently rewarded with success.

This Panglossian approach absolves him from questioning whether ownership of the press by a handful of millionaires is the best way of organising the distribution of news in a democracy. Indeed he concludes with a specific endorsement of the present set-up.

> The journalists are indispensable, but they cannot run newspapers. They in turn need press barons. . .barons prepared to seek out the truth; to print all the news that's fit to print; to go on as they began, calling a spade a spade. Barons who love newspapers and balance sheets -- but in that order.

Tell that to the miners, the rate-capped councillors and the Director-General of the BBC. □

And is to come

M. H. Ryle

The Heavy Dancers
E. P. THOMPSON *Merlin Press* £12.50 & £5.50

THE HEAVY DANCERS moves from familiar themes (peace politics in Europe, the arrogance of the nuclear state, the 'war movement' and the peace movement in the USA) to encompass quite other, more personal kinds of writing. This extended range makes it hard to find a ready category for the book. But, as it settles in the mind, it turns out to have a surprising unity. In disclosing something of his more private history, in bringing together political reflection and poetry, autobiography and literary criticism, Thompson makes us grasp, as it has shaped itself in his own life, the sense of how experience, political commitment and self-expression can support and enrich each other. For him, one feels, it's never been solely or chiefly theory, never anything abstract, which has held things together and driven things on, but always values at once more intimate and more comradely: moral conviction, bonds of solidarity. The long concluding essay, written in homage to his friend the American poet Thomas McGrath, takes up these questions explicitly, and hands us a clue that runs back into the fabric of preceding texts.

It's important to acknowledge that the expected topics, handled with the range of tone and the passionate conviction we have also come to expect, remain the book's first focus: this is a necessary bringing up to date of arguments and positions for peace campaigners. When, returning from the END Convention in Perugia, Thompson is moved to recall his own part in the Allied liberation of the city, and so to inaugurate a different kind of writing in this book, the point — and the effect — is not to dissipate the urgency of today. Rather, we're reminded that those who fought against Fascism leave us with a task to finish: to 'liberate the intentions of the dead' by creating, if we can, a continent and a world more like what they thought they were dying for.

In a tank outside Perugia, and again now as a peace movement worker, Thompson is active participant as well as reflective consciousness, a fully 'representative man' in the terms of McGrath's remark: 'I believe that all of us live twice: once personally and once as a representative man or woman. I am interested in those moments when my life line crosses through the concentration points of the history of my time.' Often, though, there's a more bitter feeling — that the values spoken for, driven to the margins of official culture, are equally disowned by the prevailing modes of opposition. Who, at such times, does the representative represent? Just as there's something tenuous, which Thompson detects, in McGrath's attempted 'positives' — Wobblies, displaced farmhands: not quite nostalgically viewed, but celebrated only as what might have been — so in his long poem 'The Place Called Choice' Thompson himself maps his outrage at the advent of the bomb against a grid of long-gone heroisms: 'And on the Pennine uplands/The Chartists march no more. . .' One thinks of the affinity Thompson, a disillusioned former Communist, has felt with Wordsworth, whose disappointed hopes in the French Revolution left him to outface an epoch of defeat with the tenacity of retrospect and introspection. Yeats, too, comes to mind — another of Thompson's most admired writers (his influence is there in 'The Place Called Choice'), who wrote, in 'The Fisherman', of how he would make his 'one poem' for 'a man who does not exist'. Thompson says of McGrath that he speaks 'in a public voice to a public which has not yet learned to listen to him', and salutes, in paying homage to him, 'the individual mind which, in the winter night of a hostile culture, must stand alone'.

To avow one's exclusion from the culture, while speaking confidently for the assumed common values of a human majority, takes nerve. Lonely intransigence risks becoming a fixed attitude, even a self-indulgence. But in bad times, we can't manage without intransigence and nerve. Through political commitment, they can become active virtues, as well as psychological resources. Everyone in the peace movement senses that what we are wanting to preserve, or bring to birth, though it faces defeat at every moment of the present, stretches back into our history and into ourselves. *The Heavy Dancers* helps (like Thompson's previous writings) to define political strategies and alternatives. It also strengthens our sense of what is at stake — what is threatened, and what might be created. □

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Fighting back

Alison Hennegan

The Women's Sharp Revenge: Five Women's Pamphlets from the Renaissance
ed. SIMON SHEPHERD *Fourth Estate* £12.95

'WITHOUT our care they lie in their beds as dogs in litter and go like lousy mackerel swimming in the heat of summer.'

'They' are the men who pen and read the misogynistic works which rail against women's filthiness, weakness, childishness, immorality, stupidity and innate inferiority. The writer, Jane Anger, is one of the first Renaissance women to defend herself and her sex against the dreary litany of woman-hating intoned by classical authors and contemporary divines, elaborated by pamphleteers and dramatists and reflected in countless stale jokes, ancient customs and legal judgments.

Fifty momentous years — from the defeat of the Armada to the eve of the Civil War — separate the writers of these five pamphlets, yet the points made, slanders refuted, fallacies exposed, necessarily recur constantly. Tone varies. The deeply serious, 20-year-old Rachel Speght, a minister's daughter, wields her considerable Biblical knowledge with impatient energy, relentless logic and justifiable anger in her 1617 attack upon the notorious Joseph Swetnam. (His *Arraignment of Lewd, idle, froward and unconstant women*, published in 1615 and reprinted in 1637, provoked four of these pamphlets and caused such widespread fury that the character of the author was first tried, then beaten up by a jury of women in the 1619 play, *Swetnam the Woman-Hater Arraigned by Women*: National Theatre/RSC, kindly note and revive.) The older 'Ester Sowernam' writes with cool sexual confidence and addresses her prologue in tones of jaunty, teasing conspiracy to 'the best disposed and worthy Apprentices of London', infamous as theatre-wreckers and brothel-breakers and themselves much satirised: strange allies they seem, at first sight, although a second suggests possible connections. 'Constantia Munda' (whose pseudonym is female but whose sex is less certain) rejoices in the period's elevation of Abuse to one of the fine arts and counter-vilifies with exuberant, neologistic variety.

Yet all of them, even the indubitably male 'Mary Tattle-well' (John Taylor), need to make and make again the same case. Woman-hating is, primarily and most terribly, blasphemous. Woman is God's creature and man's equal, not his vassal. Both of them lost Eden through sin but it is through her that it will be recovered, by virtue of the unceasing enmity between her seed and the serpent's. To revile her and spurn her is to revile and spurn God: passionate convictions passionately declared by Speght. The other writers echo and extend her: they offer 'alternative' litanies of female worthies; identify the double standard at work in education, law, sexual conduct; point out that railing abuse and ridiculous sonneteering hyperbole are two sides of the same coin; expose their detractors' shaky logic, faulty scholarship and bad grammar. On the way, they establish their own learning by an impressive range of Latin and Greek quotations and classical references, all thoughtfully glossed by Mr Shepherd who also provides helpful headnotes. By illustrating the full, pernicious contemporary power of slander to destroy a woman's name and reputation regardless of her innocence, he reminds us that, in a very real sense, the namer always has power over the named. The pamphlets and their audience sprang, he suggests, from Puritanism's increasing (though always wobbly) concern for women's status. (*After* the Revolution, and beyond the scope of this book, feminism would, briefly, join hands with Royalism.)

Most of these pamphlets make a reappearance here for the first time in three and a half centuries: Joseph Swetnam was reprinted constantly for over a hundred years. There is, as Rachel Speght was well aware, little justice in *this* world. □

FICTION 1: STORIES

The real shock

Adrianne Blue

SHIT, piss, fuck.

You're reading on, aren't you? And not for the subtlety of the logic or the politics either. It's safe, too (you know you're going to get a review — although *I* might be making an aesthetic blunder, or a breakthrough) and, if this were a short story, there'd be even less of a problem. There, the convention is to flout convention.

Ian McEwan understands this. So did Scott Fitzgerald. These two, among the most skilful fabricators of mainstream 20th-century stories, know/knew that structure is sacrosanct, but mores aren't. McEwan writes the same story Chekhov invented, Joyce Dublinised and made dour, and the *New Yorker* has certified elegant, only McEwan sets his *In Between the Sheets* and his people say, 'I have a vagina,' and 'I have fucked.' Fitzgerald shocked with flappers who flirted and smoked and petted boozy angst-ridden Bostonians.

David Leavitt, the 24-year-old Californian Yalie whose first collection of short stories **Family Dancing** (Viking, £8.95) is impressive, understands too. He carefully unravels skeins of sensibility in these nine brightly-knitted stories set mainly in the suburbs of California and New York, the two ends of the American earth. In more than one of the stories, the protagonist is a manly young fellow, decent too, who knows he is gay. In 'Territory', which first appeared in the *New Yorker*, Neil brings his male lover home. 'I'm anxious to meet Wayne,' Neil's mother says. 'I'm sure he'll be wonderful, and we'll all have a wonderful, wonderful time.' He is and so is she — lovely, loving, liberal — but they don't have a wonderful time; the threads of family life are badly strained. ▷

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Mother ain't perfect. And she is awful in 'Family Dancing', her disappointment with herself and her husbands messing up a family party and, seemingly, ruining her equally bitter and ungainly daughter, who, like so many women in this book, is lacking in understanding. In 'Dedication', Celia, a fag hag in her twenties, whose friendship with men is 'a litmus test' of their sexuality — they always turn out to be gay — is likeable enough but physically clumsy, like the other women in the book, and a plodder.

It would be easy to attribute the latent misogyny of the book to Leavitt's sexual orientation. But Leavitt's bitterness at Her is not something only gay men have voiced in contemporary fiction. Moms, perhaps the biggest buyers of fiction, have taken it on the chin for generations. Is it any wonder feminist books are selling more and more?

Fathers interest E.L. Doctorow. **Lives of the Poets** (Michael Joseph, £8.95), by the author of *Ragtime* and *Loon Lake*, is an able, agile, touching collection. Doctorow is a better writer (more percipient) than either Philip Roth or Norman Mailer, the other major exponents of American Jewish exurban fiction, because, in his stories, menopausal male intellectual types not only face the paucity of life and their disappointment with women, they also face disappointment in themselves. 'The Writer in the Family' is told by a teenaged boy whose father has died suddenly and whose aunts lie to his grandmother, saying the father has moved away to Arizona. The grandmother wonders why her son Jack hasn't written and an aunt rings up: "'You're the writer in the family," my aunt said. "Your father had so much faith in you. Would you mind making something up. Send it to me and I'll read it to her. She won't know the difference."' Writing letters from his father's grave is, shall we say, a burden, and eventually the boy finds a wily way of ending the correspondence.

Funny that **Interzone: New Science Fiction and Fantasy Writing** (Dent, £3.95) seems to have more claim as literature than does **Firebird 4** (Penguin, £3.95). Genre fiction is supposed to be a backwater, albeit a commercial one. But *Interzone* strides over the frontier and well on to a summit of art.

J. G. Ballard's 'The Object of the Attack' is a psychological study of the expert who is studying a 'crazy' who will be used as a pawn to stop the hijacking of the world by a Reaganesque astronaut who would be President. Two of the 13 stories in the book use Marilyn Monroe as a character — in Neil Ferguson's 'The Monroe Doctrine' she is President of the United States, which, if you think of it, would have been a better idea than what we have now. Angela Carter melds the tradition of the expressionist cinema (*Caligari*) with the eery master himself in a leisurely, rather 19th-century, very literary tale, 'The Cabinet of Edgar Allen Poe'. But Michael Blumlein, whose first published story takes Reagan to task, has an adventurous mind and a talent to yearn after.

The *Firebird* stories are more careful, a compendium of state-of-the-art storytelling, but not many investigations of new territory. Notable exceptions though. In Colin Thubron's 'Nothing Has Changed' an old love reappears at hospital after the hysterectomy, and there is no 'Laughter Beneath the Bridge' in Ben Okri's jagged account of a Nigeria at war where a boy may not become a man and a girl is apt to be raped before she becomes a woman.

Speaking as a stick-to-the-earth reader who was weaned on Joyce and Faulkner and Lawrence Sterne, I've got to say that educated sensibility, nice guys finishing last but understanding why, is beginning to pall. I used to think that Doris Lessing made a mistake to throw in her lot with Ray Bradbury and Arthur C. Clarke, and it was only with *Empire of the Sun* that I got around to Ballard. I'm embarrassed now. Not an awful lot of talking dirty in *Interzone:* it is an intellectual literature, written by people who are not afraid of voyages of the mind or, dare I say it, heart. □

FICTION 2: NOVELS

Search parties

Grace Ingoldby

JOHN MILNE hits the high notes in his third novel **Out of the Blue** (Hamish Hamilton, £8.95) which concerns the pursuit of the pathologically dishonest painter Paul Brown. This quest, to pin Brown down, to document him, to find him out, is carried out by various interested parties: a biographer, a student, the police of several countries. Paul, renowned as an 'unreliable witness to his own history', is trailed through London to Munich and finally to his studio in the Bavarian Alps.

Surface events, Paul's murky connections with a neo-Nazi group, make the novel an intriguing and chilly thriller which is deepened and wonderfully enriched by the pursuer Paul cannot shake off, the relentless follower, death. With great compassion Milne exposes the private face, fear and flab of the old, ill, conceited, chauvinistic and increasingly desperate public man who uses sex as a bullworker, ending up with the plain-faced Julia 'who seemed to breathe formality' but who 'does' as a companion now that Paul is so frightened of being alone. This is a very rich, well written story where nothing is skimped, full of insight, information and humour: from Paul waiting outside lavatories for Julia ('. . .all over the world men are brought to the verge of apoplexy waiting for women. . . a centrally controlled plan passed on by a subliminal code in *Fear of Flying*. . .?') to Munich bars whose clientele 'wear leftist politics much as women in Godalming wear silk scarves' to Paul, alone, still playing for time with death.

In **Say Goodbye to Sam** (Deutsch, £7.95) Michael J. Arlen adds a fresh and sensitive touch to the old, old story, the predicament of the son in the shadow of the father grappling for the light. Tom, nearly 40, journalist and prize-winning non-fiction writer, takes his young wife out to the ranch at Santa Anna where his father Sam, 'a class act and a great human being', holds court. At 72, Sam is still going strong, renowned as one of the great Hollywood directors, now making a new movie, charming, successful, selfish and up for the Oscars all round. Tom expects little: Sam's contribution to his childhood happiness could be measured on a spoon and, as the child of a famous parent, he has learnt to 'handle waiting well'. But the initiative of the visit has a David and Goliath tone that proves dangerous to them all. Sam swaggers, Tom becomes pathetic, his wife shimmers between the two. Small parts, the extras at Santa Anna which is very much a 'set', are handled wonderfully well and Arlen skilfully provides more than one version of each scene. This is Arlen's first fiction, touchingly and gracefully achieved.

Iain Banks's **Walking on Glass** (Macmillan, £8.95) poses the question 'What does it all mean?' Arranged as three separate stories which eventually collide, the question takes the form of a subdued enquiry rather than a scream. Appropriately, perhaps, the voices are little ones, squeaking through a fog of fantasy.

Quis, stiff with age, is stuck in a Gormenghast castle complete with dwarfish scullions, fish lighting, glass ceilings, long corridors, locked doors and an enigmatic Seneschal. An ex-Promotionary from the Thereuputic Wars, he must, like The Prisoner, like Alice, solve a riddle to get out. Grout is a paranoid road worker who knows that 'they' are out to get him — which, indeed, they do. Despite his evidence box containing a cassette recording of static and some cuttings of the 'strange but true' type, Grout hasn't got a clue. Clueless if not gormless is the superficially less fantastic Graham, an art student who trudges across London towards an unrequited love. Banks has a rich and surprising imagination, winking and teasing with symbolism rather than hammering with it, using language ('Oh Shit!' says the cracked voice of the castle crow) to add to the weirdness of his scenes. But, while these stories cleverly collide, they fail to satisfy or convince. The sense that Banks is only playing with his characters, toying with despair, is distracting and leaves one hungry to be seriously disturbed.

The women in J.K. Klavans's first novel, **God He was Good** (Picador, £7.95), have had it in more ways than 17. Claudine and Dolores, unmarried mothers, aspire to the position of manageress at La Boudoir beauty parlour in Ocean View, West Virginia, a dock area which is 'going black'. Here, among the styrofoam cups of diet Tab, the Pro.Curl., the nail enamel, they compete and confide in one another, drawn together in a common quest for love. 'I know I'm just lonely and maybe I'm reaching out for someone to hold me', says Dolores, who cherishes a broken heart and whose brain has been thoroughly mashed by the popular myth, the popular song. 'It seems to me,' says Claudine, 'that the way to a woman's brain is from her pussy to her heart to her head, we gotta follow the logical rules.' The girls live in relation to love: how to get it, keep it, make sure that it's 'real'. The detail of the profession of beauty is deliciously ironic in the unmitigated and dismal squalor of their surroundings, but the women's convoluted story, entwined with that of the tainted innocence of their children and the topless (frequently bottomless) night life of the Blue Garter bar, goes on too long to sustain the novel's opening sting. Love emerges as a 'half-witted' emotion, a four-letter word, no passport to the tarnished American Dream. □

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ART

Hard lines

John Spurling

Merlyn Evans: Seven Paintings 1958-72
New Art Centre, 41 Sloane Street, London SW1
The Political Paintings of Merlyn Evans
Tate

MERLYN EVANS'S enormous painting *Metropolitan Crowd Forming into a Procession* dominated the recent exhibition of work from the Fifties at the Serpentine Gallery. Evans, who was born in 1910 and died in 1973, is not a very inviting artist. His work is hard in both senses: hard to interpret visually and composed of hard, unyielding forms and, frequently, sullen colours.

His paintings, as Bryan Robertson pointed out in the catalogue to Evans's first retrospective at the Whitechapel in 1956, are 'essentially Celtic and romantic in spirit despite occasional classical ventures', but his romanticism is not of the usual British kind, sweet, soft and atmospheric. Formally, it is boxed by an uncompromising emphasis on shape and edge and its free expression is inhibited by spiky angularities and internal complications; while, as for content, it is a soured, defensive romanticism, the response of a romantic temperament to harsh and hateful experiences (which included his mother's suicide when suffering from cancer as well as the rapid political deterioration and self-immolation of the world at large). Even his relatively simple and straightforward portrait drawings have a hard, almost metallic appearance.

Comparing him to Wyndham Lewis, whose work Evans admired but did not imitate and whose right-wing sympathies he detested, Frederick Laws wrote in the catalogue to the 1974 memorial exhibition at Cardiff: 'Both were artists and intellectuals, wrote poems, and thought about politics. In common, too, they liked masks and armour and were more conscious of bones than the bloom of skin.'

Evans was one of the early British abstractionists in the Twenties and early Thirties and the work of his last period, in the late Fifties, Sixties and early Seventies, which is represented by the paintings at the New Art Centre, is almost purely abstract, but there was always a basis in figuration; just as there is an element of Surrealism (Evans contributed to the International Surrealist Exhibition in 1936), which is more of a matter of form than content, though works such as *The Entombment* and *Nocturnal Fantasy*, painted in South Africa during the Second World War and included in the Tate's current exhibition, are perhaps genuinely surrealist in that their content is cryptically personal, symbolic and eidetic. Evans, in the difficult conditions of wartime, when after training in South Africa he served as a sapper in the 8th Army in North Africa and Italy, sometimes wrote out the ideas for these works before he painted them, but virtually all his figurative work of the period covered by the Tate's exhibition has the same sense of intellectual overheating, as if the vehicle as a whole couldn't quite cope with all the power generated by its sophisticated engine, as if the ideas were too difficult for the final image.

The Tate's exhibition contains three early sculptures, a few portrait drawings and some early abstract paintings as well as the political paintings of the war years and its immediate aftermath. The powerful *Trial* of 1949, influenced by, though not directly based on, the Nuremberg Trials, is absent (it lives in Australia), but there are two versions of the squat, fortress-like central figure which clearly belong to the same cold, barbarous world as the maquettes for the 1953 'Unknown Political Prisoner' competition, thoughtfully displayed

Merlyn Evans: self-portrait

with other political works of the post-war period by various artists in the adjoining gallery.

Evans was a political artist in the true sense. He supported no particular ideology or party any more than he belonged to any movement or group of artists, but he looked at the world, saw that it was savage, evil and frightening and located its worst manifestations in international politics. Picasso's *Guernica* undoubtedly influenced his style, but his thoughts had already been turned that way by his experience of the violent conditions in Glasgow (to which his family had moved soon after his birth in Cardiff) during the General Strike and the subsequent period of high unemployment. Like so many political plays and poems of the Thirties, Evans's paintings tend to be generalised and archetypal, but their subject-matter grows more specific as time goes on. The vaguely commiserating *Suppliants* of 1934 and *Distressed Area* of 1938 lead on to the tougher *Tragic Group* (referring to Russia's invasion of Finland in 1939), the thuggishly balletic *Looters* (looking back to the Italian invasion of Abyssinia), *The Puppet Government* (Norway invaded by Germany) and the almost abstract but unmistakably ferocious *The Conflict*, in which two semi-mechanical, semi-organic red and brown monsters come to grips against a plain background of green and orange. Immediately after the war Evans painted two even more direct responses to what he himself had witnessed in Italy: the torn and twisted landscape round Ravenna and, in *The Execution*, the body of Mussolini hanging upside down.

But the masterpiece of this show and probably of all Evans's work is *The Chess Players*, painted in 1940 and referring to the non-aggression pact between Germany and Russia which carved up Poland and finally precipitated the war. The players, leaning towards each other from either side of the chess board in a claustrophobic room furnished with plush chairs, ironically symbolic pictures on the wall and a book by Hegel (who thought war an acceptable policy for vigorous nations), are not portrayed as Hitler and Stalin, but as creatures of science fiction, armoured green and orange aliens with reptilian heads and snarling rows of teeth. The painting is alarming enough now, but what must it have looked like in 1940, when the creatures were real and really playing chess with Europe? In fact it was not exhibited until 1949 when Evans had settled in London. Evans's later abstract work became rather over-schematic and primarily aesthetic. He never recaptured, never presumably had any desire to recapture, the political intensity of his youth and early middle-age. But I can think of no painter who has left quite such a passionate record of what that period really felt like: history as universal terror. □

JAZZ

Time & motion

Charles Fox

World Saxophone Quartet
Logan Hall
Live in Zurich
WORLD SAXOPHONE QUARTET
Black Saint BSR0077
Favorite Street
ROVA SAXOPHONE QUARTET
Black Saint BSR0076
Pointillistic Groove
29TH STREET SAXOPHONE QUARTET
Osmosis 6002

THE WAY MUSICIANS look — their mien, in fact — often helps to identify the kind of music they play. Monk's quirky taste in headgear, the gentlemanly persona of the Modern Jazz Quartet: both may seem trivial yet they do correspond to the approaches of those performers. If the World Saxophone Quartet, young Turks of the 1970s and musically still on the boil, seem at first glance to perpetuate the sartorial conservatism of the MJQ, they do so with a difference. For three of them sport scarlet cummerbunds and scarlet bow-ties. The odd man out, Julius Hemphill, wearing a light grey suit, is, maybe significantly, the one who seems

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to compose and arrange most of the quartet's music.

That, at any rate, was the spectacle on-stage on the Wednesday evening during what may well have been the last Camden Jazz Week (rate-capping and other hazards put the Festival's future in peril). Yet, if seeing four saxophonists standing on their own still remains a novelty in modern times — apart, of course, from the 'straight' groups, mostly notching up royalties for minor French composers — it would not have seemed so 70 or 80 years ago. All-saxophone ensembles toured American vaudeville circuits before World War I, performing a mixture of sentimental and syncopated numbers. Indeed, it was hearing a record by one of those groups, the Six Brown Brothers, that persuaded the youthful Sidney Bechet — up to then a dedicated clarinettist — to buy a soprano saxophone.

When groups of saxophonists (as distinct from lonely individuals) moved into jazz it was as sections within what were to become bigger and bigger bands. Arrangers such as Don Redman and Benny Carter wrote for them with tenderness, even passion, exploring textures as well as harmonic voicings. A wilder use of the instruments had, paradoxically, already taken place in New Orleans, where, halfway through the 1920s, Sam Morgan's Jazz Band's pair of saxophonists improvised collectively, displaying a kind of abandon that did not reappear until half-a-century later.

The essence of the saxophone quartet, of course, is rhythmic self-sufficiency. Pioneering in that direction was done by three British musicians, John Surman, Mike Osborne and Alan Skidmore, operating during the early 1970s under the acronym S.O.S.. True, a synthesiser was deployed and Skidmore occasionally sat behind a drum-kit. Nevertheless, the real point of the exercise was the way the music seesawed, how time was sometimes stated but much more likely to be implied.

The baritone saxophone forms a natural pivot for a group of this sort. Much of the World Saxophone Quartet's impetus comes from reiterated figures played by Hamiet Bluiett, or else from David Murray making parallel use of the bass clarinet. Part of the WSQ's superiority to both the Rova Quartet and the 29th Street Quartet derives precisely from that kind of dexterity, especially its avoidance of the obvious. By contrast the Rova Quartet sounds rigid while the 29th Street Quartet rarely forgets older ways of going about things.

Like S.O.S., the Rova Quartet takes its name from the surnames of the players: Jon Raskin, Larry Ochs, Andrew Voigt and Bruce Ackley, all active on the American West Coast, who got together midway through the 1970s. More emphasis seems to be placed upon composition. But a fascinating aspect of the record is that it uses compositions — visual, sometimes merely 'notional', rather than notated — by Steve Lacy, the only musician apart from Bechet to specialise on the soprano saxophone. In pieces such as 'Beeline' there is reiteration, but using variation of accenting or timbre, suggesting affinities with systems music. Logic, in fact, tends to get exposed by unravelling rather than in putting together.

If the Rova Quartet often gives the impression of worrying too much about qualifying as art, the 29th Street Quartet, as its name suggests, has more credibility on the sidewalks. Once again the soloists are not the equal of those in the WSQ, except for the alto player Bobby Watson, most renowned for his longish stay with Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers. Watson roves energetically between the melancholy, even pleading commencement and conclusion of 'The Curious Child'. He and the group's other alto saxophonist, Ed Jackson, joust plausibly enough through a 10-minute version of the old bebop classic, 'Anthropology'. But there are, too, excursions into collective lushness, like the Ellingtonish timbres to be heard in 'One Chance At Life'.

That the World Saxophone Quartet comes out on top is because of the more imaginative interplay and use of colour (the musicians can, as it happens, muster more instruments than their rivals); the rhythmic looseness that allows players to take liberties with the beat and yet always return to it; and the exceptional calibre of the soloists — particularly David Murray and Hamiet Bluiett. Bluiett takes scarcely any solos on the LP (recorded in 1981). Murray, however, confirms once again, as he did at the Logan Hall a fortnight ago, that he is perhaps the most gifted of the newer tenor players. A decade ago he was modelling himself upon Albert Ayler, using that musician's serpentine manner as a starting point. But in 'My First Winter', heard both at Camden and Zurich, he reveals a dazzling awareness of the entire tradition of his instrument in jazz: Don Byas's silken touch, Hawkins's imperious bravado, even Rollins's crotchetiness, all get subsumed, interpreted, turned into facets of a totally personal style. □

THEATRE

Gaseous

Benedict Nightingale

Copperhead
ERIK BROGGER *Bush*
Tom and Viv
MICHAEL HASTINGS *Royal Court*

SOMEWHERE IN the Pennsylvania coal-belt there's an underground mine that has been on fire for years and years belching noxious gases into the community perched above part of it; and no one, least of all the Reagan administration, seems both willing and able to douse it. That's bad news for the wretched residents, but good news for dramatists in search of a suggestive metaphor, as Erik Brogger would seem to be. At any rate, he's set his new **Copperhead** in just such an 'ecological disaster area', as someone calls it, and populated the place with several strikingly and perhaps symbolically dilapidated characters.

Brogger, to his credit, isn't one of those American dramatists whose horizons are the east and west sides of a back porch somewhere in Connecticut. Recently, he produced something called *The Basement Tapes*, which showed a Reactionary Independent Party being launched by a tricky Richard Nixon, a bovine Gerald Ford and a G. Gordon Liddy who turned out to be a mewling neurotic posing as a Nietzschian superhero. It was too long, too predictable and, in some respects, too dated: a case of treading Watergate, so to speak, when there were plenty of fresh fish waiting for the satirist's harpoon to hit them. But at least it demonstrated a concern for the state of the States: one which, in its shambling, funny-glum way, *Copperhead* shares.

The principal residents of the Grasslands Hotel in Fertile Pa., to give the setting its somewhat exorbitantly ironic title, are three. Georgina Hale plays Lucille, a 'widow by choice' whose main interest is tracking down her runaway daughter. John Bowe is her part-time private eye and fuller-time boyfriend, a drunk called Calvin. And Michael Byrne, bug-eyed and frazzle-haired, is a local minister who carries around a ventriloquist's dummy, uses it to voice his more subversive feelings, and hopes one day to put out the fires demonically seething in the pits below his church.

To this community of dreamers and derelicts comes a personable ex-con played, and (as it happens) too sedately played, by Adrian Dunbar. He offers salvation in the form of $1,000 bills, which he skilfully manufactures and the others agree to foist on the banks within driving distance. To give away every aspect of the evening's denouement would be unfair, since it neatly, perhaps too neatly, parcels together threads of the plot that have seemed to be straggling off nowhere. Sufficient to say that the play is not called *Copperhead* for nothing. Venomous snakes — the sort about which there's 'no mercy nonsense, they don't think about their victims' — are yet another of this hapless community's afflictions; and, as it turns out, they have their human counterparts. The harmless-seeming young visitor, with his touching diffidence about women, is actually the sort who'd sink his fangs into you and leave you for dead if he thought you were threatening his hunting-party.

The author is clearly not just playing silly Broggers, in spite of all his amusing and would-be amusing lines. This is a place where 'civilised logic doesn't live any more — it curled up and died of loneliness'. It's a place where losers are to be found precariously surviving and callous young inadequates come to wreak destruction. It's a place which is being slowly poisoned by its own fumes and might one day simply be swallowed up. It is, in short, the America to whose forlorn confusions more than one writer has accustomed us. Lanford Wilson has been here and so, more frequently and formidably, has Sam Shepard.

But as soon as one begins to make such comparisons one sees the relative thinness of this play. It's well meant and sometimes enjoyable, but imaginatively skimpy. It lacks the force to seize you, as Shepard undeniably seizes you, and insist that you share its vision. Nor is Brogger stylistically as confident as the American dramatist to whom the Bush has more than once given house-room, Beth Henley. Like her, he ventures into the grotesque, dickers with the vaguely gothic; but, unlike her, he can't convince you that he's writing about real people with real feelings,

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living in a real place and worth a real concern on the part of the audience. We may laugh, we don't much care. Indeed, I for one left the theatre with scarcely more than a shrug of either the mind or the heart, and that, given what's actually supposed to be smouldering beneath the play's surface, didn't seem enough.

The admirable **Tom and Viv** is back from a visit to Broggerland, with Julie Covington still at her edgy best as the first Mrs Eliot, but with the American Edward Hermann now playing the poet. It is, on the whole, a satisfactory substitution. Hermann is oddly awkward in the few moments when anger is demanded of him, relying on a sort of sudden, staccato bark whose source is all too evidently the throat and not the stomach; but then I suppose it could be argued that Eliot was ill-at-ease with that emotion too.

He's better, much better as the sad sack in bowler and black suit, doggedly enduring whatever misery a calamitous marriage could cause him. There's a striking moment when his face reddens, crumples, begins absurdly to blubber, and another, still more memorable, when he simply stands there, those grey dough-features exuding grief and helplessness and a kind of dopey bewilderment. Perhaps the most brilliant poet our century has produced stands accused of stupidity, and of course with justice, since only a profoundly stupid man could have persistently expected someone as volatile as Michael Hastings's Viv to be 'clear and very precise'. □

FILMS

Questing boy

John Coleman

The Neverending Story (U)
Warner; Classics, Oxford Street and Chelsea; ABCs, Bayswater and Edgware Road
Fast Talking (18)
Classics, Tottenham Court Road and Chelsea
My Own Country
ICA
La Belle et la Bête (PG)
Everyman

WOLFGANG PETERSEN directed that money-spinner *The Boat* and, if the reactions of a housefull of kids at the press show are anything to go by, he may well have another winner in **The Neverending Story**, which he co-wrote with Herman Weigel from Michael Ende's novel: initial turbulence swiftly dwindled to respectful hush, broken only by some healthy wolf-whistles when a Lolitan little beauty cropped up as the Empress near the end. Alice dreamed *her* adventures; Petersen ingeniously carries the notion a step further, giving a new meaning to reader-participation. Bookish young Bastian (Barret Oliver), whose mother has recently died and whose father reproves him for drawing unicorns during maths classes, escapes from a trio of older bullies en route to school, taking refuge in a dusty, tome-crammed shop from which he 'borrows' a hefty volume (with the film's title)

In search of a name: Tami Stronach as the Empress in *Neverending Story*

against which the shop's owner has invitingly warned him. Racing up to the school's attic, Bastian settles down with his prize.

And we are forthwith plunged into a sword-and-sorcery fantasy, another quest with a quota of names that look like mistypings (Gmork, Urgl, Engywook) and not much less than the end of a magic civilisation at stake; yet the omens are propitious for once. Lewis Carroll's ghost clearly hovers over a vast rocky monster riding a steamroller-bike into a terror-struck glade: munching on limestone, the creature approves, 'Nice bouquet. Must be a vintage year,' then goes on to mourn the encroachments of a void, The Nothing. He and his tiny companions, one on a Racing Snail, the other hang-gliding from a giant Bat, make for the steepling Ivory Tower where the Empress lies sick, a Boschy crowd of suppliants has collected and a warrior-lad Atreyu (Noah Hathaway) gallops off to a cure for the Empress and assorted perils. He is, of course, there for page-turning young Bastian to identify with, but with a crafty difference. When Atreyu loses his horse in a swamp, a quick cut shows Bastian weeping. Better, as the heroic lad munches lunch, Bastian himself reaches for a sandwich, only to leave it half-eaten in recognition of miles yet to be travelled.

Best of all, the boy-in-the-attic's growing realisation that he has been written into the story — a yelp of his is heard by the characters, he is seen in a magic mirror — reaches a Tinkerbell peak when that nymphet Empress cries out for him to give her a name, which he does, howling it indistinctly through a storm-invaded window. Admiring the cunning of this, I confess to some grown-up qualms as to the implicit message, which is *not* about reading books but rather the opposite: about day-dreaming like billy-o, sinking yourself in fantasy. Technically, *The Neverending Story* is notable: marvellously realised beasties good and bad (an amiable dog-faced Luckdragon, a giant futile-guru tortoise out of Carroll), great agitated land and sky vistas; and some bonuses of humour include Patricia Hayes bossing about with vile, healing potions.

Back to reality with a bump in the Australian Ken Cameron's **Fast Talking**, a sort of juvenile delinquent pendant to his *Monkey Grip*. Rod Zuanic plays perky no-hoper Steve, a Sydney 15-year-old damned in an alcoholic dad, runaway mum, drug-pushing elder brother who leans on him to do likewise, and teachers who have either given him up long ago or fail to get through when they try: newcomer Miss Hart (Tracy Mann) is a real bonzer trier, letting an uncouth classmate use condom packet instructions for remedial reading. When dad poisons Steve's mongrel for sheep-worrying, the going becomes even rougher. An ex-con, ex-racing champ befriends the cocky runt, after catching him on the grab in his bike-repair yard; for a while gets him interested patching up a machine for himself. This Redback (Steve Bisley) encapsulates the often comic occasion's essential pessimism — realism, if you will: 'your choice, mate,' he says as Steve, having set fire to a master's room and crashed a joy-riding car with his pals, takes off on his bike towards what can only be nowhere. Of its pretty bleak kind, it's well done: how worth doing is something else. A *Kes* it is not.

Lino Brocka is a prolific Filipino filmmaker and brave demonstrator against the Marcos régime, recently jailed for supporting a transport workers' strike, released after international protests, but still very much at risk. The ICA is showing his lucid melodrama, **My Own Country**, which remains unscreened in Brocka's country, though with dictatorial hypocrisy the authorities wanted to have it in the Manila festival. A young husband, needing money for his wife's dangerous pregnancy, signs an anti-union paper at the printer's where he works; then is forced into helping some criminal acquaintance rob his boss's house: a police siege and inevitable tragedy. The sad social (i.e political) context is vividly populated, confidently ranging from shop-floor through sleazy bars to a media-busy dénouement.

Revived in a new print, Cocteau's 1946 **La Belle et la Bête** is a visual enchantment with Jean Marais' tender, pussy-faced Beast (though not above animally sniffing as he scents game) winning equivocal sympathy over Josette Day's sacrificial Beauty. A fairy-tale with an edge, it is rumoured to have inspired Garbo — when the transformation into Prince Charming occurred — to murmur, 'Give me back my Beast'. □

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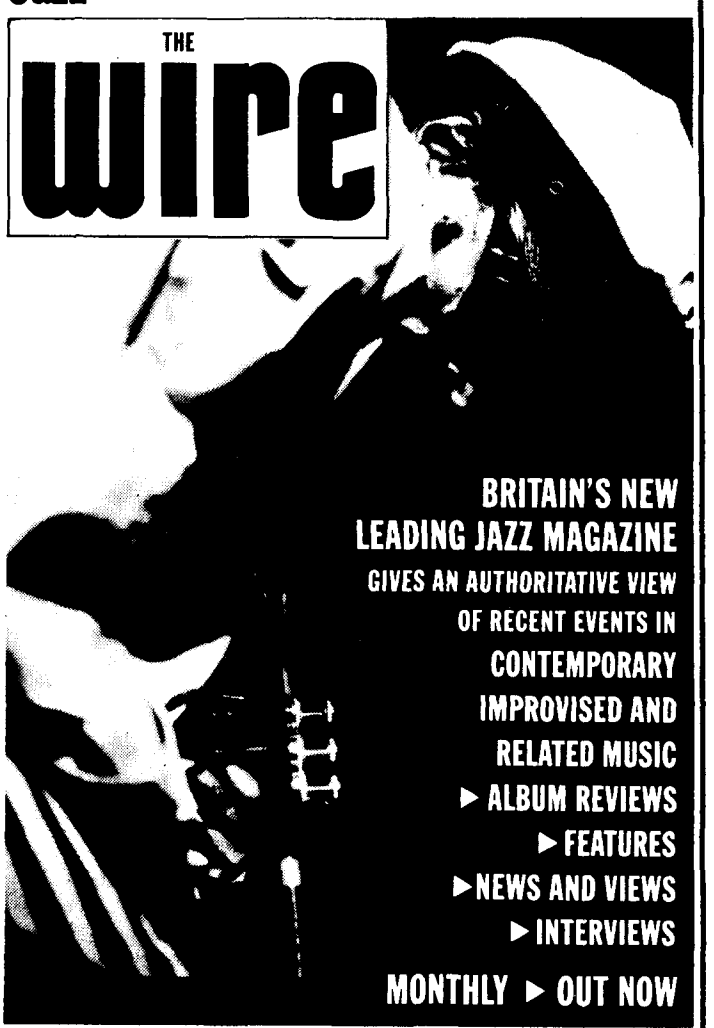

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Gate-crashing the Kraton

Jonathan Falla

Camera Press

Javanese dancers

JAVA: My friend Zamzami comes from Cirebon, on the north coast, and at Cirebon there is a palace or *kraton*. Java still has a few such *kratons*, the Republic of Indonesia tolerating the redundant Sultans, the local people doting on them. Zamzami decided he would take me to Cirebon for *Sekaten*, the celebration of the prophet Mohammed's birthday.

In other towns, *Sekaten* is now a tourist jamboree. At Cirebon it's for the locals, in their thousands.

A fair gathers before the *kraton* gates. You have to like people and to share the Javanese taste for close proximity. They tend to compress themselves into the smallest space available. At nightfall, as the swarm gathered, mere movement through the tight mass became a sport in itself. Youths formed chains, hands on shoulders, and for the hell of it jogged into the dark pack, out the other side, back in again. A 'mini-train' did the same thing, ruthlessly, laden with screaming girls, two young men standing on the tractor waving torches and blowing whistles. Stalls lit by scores of fierce white pressure lamps cooked and flogged everything imaginable, exacerbating the night heat. Two dwarfs danced on top of a lorry to advertise a tonic wine.

But *Sekaten* is a deeply serious affair. Javanese rulers emanate a spiritual force, and the closer you are physically the more you will absorb. Zamzami pulled me through the *kraton* courtyards — dank and unlit, cut about by fragmentary crumbling walls — to the single-storey hall of heirlooms: canon, musical instruments, pikes and daggers, a carriage shaped like the mythical bird *garuda*, dark wooden chests. Each of these artefacts is a repository of power, and the hot storerooms were jammed with incense and the poor, who had paid to come, each with a rag which they rubbed over the heirlooms, then over their own faces. The queue wound through the palace into the audience hall, where elderly palace servants wrapped in old batik, sweating by pressure lamp, sat in silence as the populace came through rubbing everything in sight, even the door knobs. Zamzami and his educated brother were embarrassed.

'What are they doing?' said Zamzami, as though he'd never been there before. His brother had an answer.

'These are not Cirebon. These are ignorant people from the villages.'

We fought our way out past a bamboo cage in which villagers could sit the whole night, close to the source of power.

The following day, prior to the Sultan's procession, we drove out of town to a sacred spring where sages accepted gratuities and heard requests by a small, profoundly unimpressive pool with a standpipe. There was a tomb nearby. 'A prophet,' said Zamzami. 'No, a hero, Prince Siliwangi!' said his brother. No matter who; this was a source of power. Boys sold small plastic jerrycans to be filled with holy water. Vast women launched into the pool like hippos, stripped to the waist. The boys gawped at the enormous breasts and whispered (approximately) 'Wow! Look at that milk!' Zamzami grumbled, as the faithful gulped the water, 'Oh my God, they believe it.'

BUT WHEN, in the evening, we tried to return to the *kraton* to see the procession to the Sultan's mosque and the blessing of heirlooms, he was deeply disappointed to find that we could come nowhere near the gates. The crowd was impacted; the stone walls had sprouted a human foliage. Police and soldiers stood across the road, eyeing the people warily.

'Ridiculous,' said Zamzami. 'It gets worse every year.'

'We'll get in,' said his brother, 'if we use him!' And he pointed at me.

The two of them strode up to the nearest soldier.

'This (*they lied*) is an official from the British Embassy in Jakarta. You must help.'

And help the soldiers did, waving us through the cordon and standing us conspicuously under the arch. At which moment the crowd hysteria mounted — not, I was relieved to see, in rage, but in excitement; the procession was coming. The soldiers fought to keep the road to the mosque open, waving their rifles, smacking heads and yelling, 'Sit down!' until the crowd all did. I cowered behind the gate hinges. But then the Sultan himself appeared and instantly everyone produced their rag and waved it frantically overhead to soak up his radiant power.

'Ridiculous,' muttered Zamzami yet again in my ear.

'Come inside the gate, Sir,' called a soldier.

The procession, headed by an engaging blend of elderly palace officials in batik and girl guides, bore the entire stock of palace heirlooms to the mosque for blessing. Fine featured and expressionless, the Sultan and his family walked behind, followed by retainers bringing palanquins of food. There was an extraordinary shabbiness — everything, even the retainers' jackets, looked worn out.

They disappeared into the mosque and at once the problem that gripped the whole assembly was, how to get out. Our pole position disadvantaged us now, but the soldiers began yelling again; a motorcade was coming, crawling out of the *kraton* gates, honking furiously. With delightful irreverence the crowd climbed on board. Zamzami helped me up, and thus it was that a fake British Embassy official rode out of Cirebon *kraton* sitting on the boot of a Javanese General's Mercedes. □

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Naseem Khan
Recycling

SEVENTY-THREE years ago, on 14 April, the most advanced, the most sophisticated, the most unsinkable ship in the world sank. It left behind its name — the Titanic — as a symbol for cataclysmic disasters.

For a single symbol it says a lot. But there's even more that could be squeezed out of it, as the performance group Welfare State International and the production company Filmscreen demonstrate. The group's original show, *Raising the Titanic*, took place on and around Limehouse Basin in East London two summers ago. A record of it, with additional documentary material, can be seen on Easter Monday on Channel 4.

'Raising the Titanic' sounds like a triumphant evocation, like bringing the Mary Rose up from below the waves. In fact, it is anything but heroic. WSI's three-month stint in Limehouse resulted in a show that is part-pageant, part-musical, part-fairground extravaganza. What it is not in any way is a song of praise. This Titanic isn't the glittering prize, the god that failed, of conventional mythology. It's presented, through music-hall terms, as a stratified and inefficient unit, kept afloat purely by its own conviction. The images, backed up by Adrian Mitchell's tart lyrics — from 'The Stokers' Song' to 'Arrivederci, Western Civilisation' — are broad and savage. And, although the whole ends with audiences joining in an infectious barn dance, and lantern-lit paper boats bobbing away across the Basin, the overall tone is caustic.

Documentary evidence and statistics back up the point. Of the 3rd-class passengers and crew, 1,221 died; 120 lst-class passengers and 162 from the 2nd class drowned. Unreality reigned. There were too few lifeboats. The look-out had been issued with no binoculars. As passengers broke down their cabin doors in order to escape, pursers followed them round billing them for the damage. The waste and the heedlessness, the film suggests, have their relations today.

The style of the imagery will surprise no one who knows anything about the work of the Welfare State. One of the longest established of what are still (totally erroneously) called 'fringe theatre groups', and now based in Cumbria, they've evolved over the years into roles that they describe by several cryptic titles — Civic Magicians, Engineers of the Imagination. 'Theatre' of course is a misnomer for a start. Strands in the Welfare State's product have come from all sorts of origins — visual arts, music, performance art, street theatre. But it's not so much the parentage that matters as the present purpose. WSI works to create large-scale celebrations with and for specific local communities (from Ulverston to Limehouse) that will entertain, stimulate and move people and that will ultimately, or so they hope, fill them with that particular rare joy of imagination shared and a new sense of community formed. To do this, they deal with all sorts of showman and shaman techniques — circus and puppetry, barkers and clowns — all mixed up and jumbled round in a surrealistic mould somewhere between the sinister and the absurd. 'Bosch, Brueghel and Grunwald' their publicity cites as the touchstones for which they seek modern equivalents. What results is archetypal processional theatre with persistent images of death and rebirth, fire and ice. It is deliberately rough. It recycles, it uses junk. It looks tatty and often crude. At times obscure, it is almost always powerful.

On the whole, these are not qualities that will spring out of the television at you on Easter Monday. *The Raising of the Titanic* is well enough, a useful introduction to the work of WSI and an examination of what happened on the greatest ship in the world. But it is Welfare State filtered, contextualised and interpreted.

Now it so happens that Channel 4 had the opportunity to present WSI in a neat, unadulterated form. In 1983 the group made a film in conjunction with Sheffield University's Film Department. Called *King Real and the Hoodlums*, it is based by its writer Adrian Mitchell on the Lear story. A larger-than-life grotesque tale, it has Real's large-titted daughters teetering greedily up high ladders to grab at keys of power, thrones of junk, orgies of manic destruction in the royal bunker as the world explodes. Outside Lear/Real totters up a blue-gray waste of a beach.

The evolution of the film, made in nearby Barrow-in-Furness (a nuclear base) with a cast of 150, is alone a tale worth telling. But the film itself is raw, unfinished Welfare State. See *Raising of the Titanic* and *King Real* in conjunction and you will begin to get some idea of what this innovative performance group is about: their strengths and weaknesses.

On grounds of technical quality and standards, Channel 4 could point to much to explain their decision not to screen the film. *King Real* is flawed. The group was harried by all the pressures and misfortunes that come in a project that relies largely on good will. Editing in experience has meant an absence of a rhythm that can carry the Jarry-like excesses of the plot along. But, for all that, *King Real* is strong, shocking and visually compelling enough to make you sit up and shudder.

But it does give rise to questions. The relationship between television and art is an ambiguous one. At present, television notes what things are successful (*Nicholas Nickleby, East* etc) and sensibly trawls them in. It functions as a useful 'second best' service: there was no way I could see Moving Being's *Mabinogi* in Caernarvon. Great that Channel 4 let me catch something of it at home. But, like a postcard, it doesn't replace the experience. And shouldn't television be trying to do just that? And, on the other hand, shouldn't theatre groups be trying to reinterpret themselves (as WSI has done) in the terms of the new medium? If they don't, television will get blander and blander and more and more similar. (And theatre groups more and more inturning.) It would no doubt be a troublesome marriage. But it could be a fruitful one. □

TELEVISION

Hugo Williams
Tribal rites

THE QUEEN — or was it Stanley Baxter? — visited Portugal last week in order to welcome that country into our great European Commonwealth of Nations. 'But you are positively the last member-state I'm admitting,' she seemed to be saying. 'After you, I'm closing the membership once and for all.'

In **The Queen in Portugal** (ITV) Court Correspondent Anthony Carthew thought that Portugal had little authority in the world today but, from his pictures, it was obvious that the natives were excited to see the Duke of Edinburgh, who, as everyone knows, is the object of a bizarre cult in this little known Atlantic atol. The Duke bowed good-naturedly through his cult sunglasses. Whizzing along in her launch, the Queen looked at her watch a lot, as if she were running late. What does she keep in her handbag I wonder. A guidebook? A Walkman? I bet she's got a gun in there in case she's cornered some dark night by Portuguese cannibals and Duke of Edinburgh freaks.

It seems there is also a cult involving her great grandfather, Edward VII. Unlike anyone else who ever visited Portugal, this fat old man had a lot of success with the native women, so the Queen unveiled a shrine to him and the mayor read a very long leather-bound speech in the Portuguese dialect, which the embarrassed interpreter seemed unable to translate for some reason. She whispered a censored version to the Queen, who looked surprised by what she heard, but said nothing. Next came the signing ceremony and our Court Correspondent was overjoyed to report that the pen the local people had laid on for the occasion was refusing to function like a Western pen. The Queen scratched away for a moment or two then opened her bag and took out — no not a gun — but what was obviously a British pen, because it worked perfectly.

Did you know that the British Crown Jewels were not allowed to be filmed? Apparently there is a superstition among the islanders that the power of these relics will be destroyed if a film camera 'sees' them. John Pitman, continuing his entertaining **Just Another Day** (BBC-2) offered the Head Man of the Tower £5 to let his crew in but the wise old fellow merely bared his metal-filled teeth and gave the sign for refusal. Had he ever tried on the crown when no one was looking? He claimed not, adding, 'Anyway, I have no desire to try on the crown.' Suddenly there it was, sitting firmly on his head in all our minds.

'What happens when the red light comes on?' asked a woman about to steal the life-force of a friend posing on the block where Raleigh lost his head. 'That means it's ready,' answered her friend, spreading her arms. Photographic trickery was also responsible for a beefeater posing in broad daylight with a nude model for *Escort* magazine, he said. I was amazed to learn that over a hundred people *live* in the tower. It's a whole society, the doctor's wife and the

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chaplain's wife and 'Are you playing golf tomorrow?' 'I suppose so, how about you?' Unbelievably, there is even an 18-hole golf course in the grounds of the Tower.

The Tower of London is what the semi-retired Portsmouth Dockyard will be like if shipwright Brian Patterson and his unofficial Preservation Society has its way. The Docks officially died in September '84 when its 7,000 workforce was reduced to 2,000 and its status to a short-term maintenance yard. 'They can do away with it on paper,' said Patterson in **Ours to Keep** (BBC-2), 'but when the Falklands came along they found they needed us.' Good reason to call it a day, you may think.

Union Street, the libidinous highway connecting Plymouth with its Royal Docks, has also seen worse days. This used to be where poor old Jack Tar poured his wretched wages back into the economy through every available orifice. But not any more. 'I charge £4 short time indoors,' said a Union Street girl on a 1963 clip dug up for this **Forty Minutes** tribute (BBC-2). 'He has his satisfaction, then a cup of coffee.' Something about her description reminded me of donating blood. 'It's a notorious, disreputable, lovely street,' said an old goer, 'but it's dead now.' 'My favourite is the Honey Monster,' said a taxi driver. 'Over 70, charges about £5.' At that price you presumably get the Honey Monster for life. □

Weekend competition

No 2867 **Set by E.O. Parrott**

Robert Graves retold the Greek myths and legends, but how might the stories have fared if the writer had been Jane Austen, for example? Or Walter Scott, or Fay Weldon? Extracts of up to 150 words from any such writer's version of the myths. Deadline 17 April.

No 2864 **Set by S. J. Dixon**

Nouns, verbs, adjectives or adverbs derived from the names of contemporary notables.

Report **By Rosie Hughes**

There's no denying you've been a mite soggy, these last couple of weeks. I hate to hear you getting ticked off, knowing how hard you do try, but 'pastry don't make a pasty' as we say in the village where I come from. Still, you're a bit more tasty today — etymology does perk you up so — and I'm quite happy to forget past sorrows if you are. Two pounds per entry to all of you printed below.

hailsham *adj.* term used to reassure the elderly about their health: *You're looking very hailsham this morning, grandpa.*

St John Stevas *interj.* mild donnish oath: *Upon my St John Stevas!*

STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

heath *vb.* to chase a vanished dream: *He sits up half the night heathing away by the hearth.*

GEORGE COWLEY

peterhall *vb.* to throw loud and public tantrums, esp. when denied sweets, ice creams, etc: *I don't care how much you peterhall, I'm not giving you any more pocket money to spend on rubbish.*

D. A. PRINCE

wheen *vb.* to write with extraordinary speed: *He wheened a two-volume history of the GLC rates debate between breakfast and a luncheon appointment with the commissioning editor of Channel 4.*

kellner *vb.* to administer a statistical corrective to an unconsidered psephological assumption: *He kellnered the post-budget Mori poll/ It may be ideologically correct, but has it been kellnered?*

NICHOLAS MURRAY

di *vb.* to change appearance at frequent intervals: *She's rumoured to di her hair.*

JOHN O'BYRNE

runcy *adj.* well-meaning: *I know he doesn't achieve much, but he's a runcy sort of a lad.*

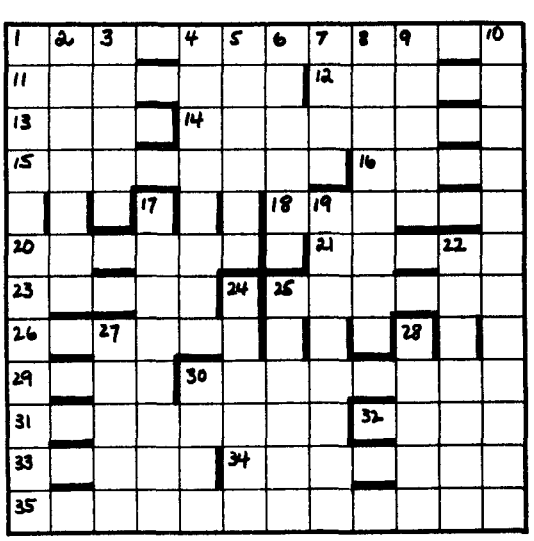
proop *n.* comforting nostrum of little value: *I wrote for advice, but they fobbed me off with proops.*

NOEL PETTY

Salamanca 93

'Jekyll & Hyde'

PRIZES: £25 cheques for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Salamanca 93, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 30 April.



Name _____

Address _____

_____

_____

The solution and prizewinners to Crossword 1473 will appear next week.

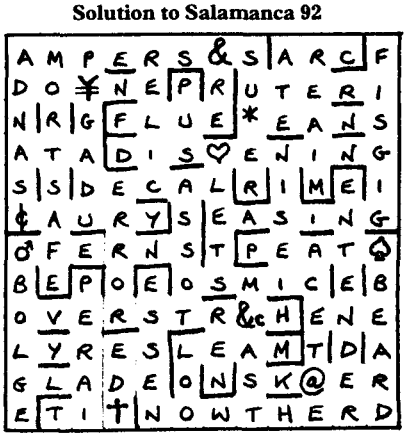
JEKYLL

1 Plants found distributed in area with more silt (12)
11 These feet are lissom and round perhaps (7)
12 Long to relax in the field (5)
13 Sign you'll see this setter coming in drunk (4)
14 Fish? The oil so produced (8)
15 Wife of Nicholas, perhaps, found drunk in tavernas? (8)
16 Boat you see not needed to get salmon (4)
18 Bit of fruit? Stoned prune'ld do? (6)
20 Like our emblem quite enormous framed? (6)
21 Stamps? These may be needed to get them? (5)
23 Name's certainly holding one back: this is to be admired (5)
25 What's used for making varnish puts a restraint on damage (6)
26 A hike's possibly what you'ld need to get water out east? (6)
29 This, if false one, could be liar? (4)
30 Like some bottles set in counter (8)
31 To do with varying shore-line, its acute changes (8)
32 Point: on edges of chewers usually showing prominence (4)
33 Ibex, long having left peninsular rocks (5)
34 A Scot's to keep quiet when he comes in tipsy requiring silence to be held (7)
35 These moths raided my linen and ate wantonly: need getting rid of? (12)

HYDE

1 Plants found distributed in area with more silt (12)
2 These feet are lissom and round perhaps (7)
3 Long to relax in the field (5)
4 Sharkskin: it's hard in young (8)
5 Soviet? That is gone, having changed, you see, inside? (6)
6 Day for getting fresh linen? (This is a thrill for Jock) (6)
7 Some belomancers causing a flap (4)
8 Japanese waitress: a timid person, most submissive (8)
9 One needs to have a share out of consideration (5)
10 Enjoyable excursion to the country's certain to need time to take in spot (12)
17 Stone from space that's round and landed (one before, being outside) (8)
19 Clear ice broken by turnip-rooted plant (8)
22 Noah's made base on tip of Ararat? "—!" (7)
24 Time to meet with old crone: this is caused 'by the pricking of my thumbs'? (6)
25 Old rough bristling's detestable (6)
27 Sci-fi author coming up with Arab's shirt (genius to fail no more) (5)
28 Look contemplatively at resolute King abdicating (5)
30 Proficient combatants in French (4)

Solution to Salamanca 92



Signs used for abbreviations are found on page 1561 of Chambers 1983 edition.

Prizewinners to Salamanca 92

C.J. Butler (Cowdenbeath, Fife)
Roger Hooper (London SW19)
Mrs Betty Hughes (Deganwy, Gwynedd)

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For further details and an application form please contact Gwynne Callow at CND, 11 Goodwin Street, London N4 3HQ enclosing an SAE (no telephone enquiries please). Closing date for returned application forms will be 29 April. Interviews (by panel) will be held in the second week of May.

We welcome your application, which will be considered on merit irrespective of race, marital status or sex.

Derbyshire County Council
Education — Youth and Community Service
Chesterfield District

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Required to co-ordinate, support and develop a programme of innovative and non-traditional work with girls and young women. Experience in women's issues and working with young women necessary.

JNC for Youth Workers and Community Centre Wardens Conditions of Service. Salary JNC 3, Points 4-8.

Closing date: **19 April 1985.** Interviews: **30 April 1985**

Application forms and further details from **the Area Education Office, Newbold Rd, Chesterfield S41 7QT.**

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ilea

For an application form, to be returned by 19th April 1985, write to: GLC Director-General's Department, Ref: 5825, Room 203, The County Hall, SE1 7PB or telephone 01-633 1527.

PART-TIME RESEARCHER

As a result of maternity, the Labour Research Department has a vacancy for a temporary part-time researcher in the areas of local government and privatisation. The job runs from appointment (AS SOON AS POSSIBLE) to the **end of September 1985.**

Salary: **£4,815 p.a.** for a **17½ hour week.**

Commitment to the trade union movement and knowledge of the areas to be covered essential.

Apply in writing by **Friday 19 April** to: **Secretary, LRD, 78 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8HF.**

The interviews will be held on **Thursday 25 April.**

OV SELECTION have a number of vacancies for temporary & permanent office staff with typing skills. We welcome enquiries from mature people as well as College leavers. Phone Odette Veazey, OV Selection (Emp. Agy), Abford House, 15 Wilton Road, London SW1V 1LT. 01-828 8345.

PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATE SELECTION. Westminster North Labour Party would welcome applications for nominations as parliamentary candidate, as soon as possible. Closing date for nominations — 7 May. Most branches meet second week April. Westminster North policy is to recommend that all affiliates only nominate women or members of ethnic minorities and we have instructed our Executive to regard this as the key factor when shortlisting. Party members are asked to apply accordingly, in particular those who are manual workers. Details (with 50 copies if possible) to Jen McClelland, 39 Chippenham Road, London W9 2AH. Further information: 01-286 9692. Potential candidates interested in meeting Party members in an informal atmosphere are invited to the Labour Rooms, address above, from 6-7.30 pm, Tuesday 9 April.

WANTED: DEVELOPMENT ECONOMIST (Socialist) to help polish finished material for book publication. Box (13) 0558.

SCHOLARSHIPS

AIREY NEAVE Memorial Trust
SCHOLARSHIPS available for research into Freedom under National Laws. Closing date for completed applications June 30th 1985
send s.a.e. for forms to Hon.Sec. (NS),
Airey Neave Memorial Trust
House of Commons, London, SW1
The fund remains open.

STATEMENT

DO YOU SAY — 'Socialism can't work because of: human nature, survival of the fittest, the capitalist class wouldn't allow it, we can't produce enough to meet all human needs, the majority of people can't understand it?'. These are myths and we can prove it. For free literature write: Socialist Party of GB, 52 Clapham High St, London SW4 7UN. Phone 01-622 3811.

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WANTED

ESTABLISHED AFRICAN writer seeks room in North London for four months. Maximum rent £30 p.w. Phone 01-267 3917.

PURSUITS

JUTTA OF South Bank Third World First Society (82/83) what happened? Contact: Mike 01-231 3900/9.

LADY INTENDING visit Florence, would appreciate company of knowledgeable companion, male 50ish, philosophical and tolerant. Prior meeting London. Box (14)0573.

20 YEAR-OLD Hungarian female student of English, seeks au pair post with English family, for July and August '85. Box (14)0580.

WANTED: FEMALE pen-pal. Professional, 35-year-old male, well-educated, athletic, seeks similar female as a pen-pal. Write: Bob Cahill, 110 N. Wacker, Chicago, Illinois 60606, USA.

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LISTINGS

FRI 5 APR

MOLESWORTH 'Defend Molesworth against Cruise' 10am sponsored marches leave **STEVENAGE, LEICESTER, CAMBRIDGE.** Register in advance with CND or join marches along the route. **EASTER SUNDAY:** Arrive Molesworth early evening. Light up the base through the night. Bring candles, torches. **EASTER MONDAY:** Ring the base. Bring bells, etc. 2pm Mass planting of pennants. **Org. CND, 11 Goodwin St, London, N4 3HQ.**

SAT 6 APR

BIRMINGHAM 'Countdown to Star Wars' public meeting with Bishop Montefiore, Lord Brockway, Oliver Postgate, Dr. Will Howard, Dr. Julie Dahlitz. 2pm-4.30pm George Cadbury Hall, Bristol Rd, Selly Oak. Adm. Free. **Details: World Disarmament Campaign, 238 Camden Rd, London, NW1 9HE. 01-485 1067.**

CARDIFF 'Radical Television?' — wkend of screenings, seminars, discns. 'Regions & Nations', 'Interventions political & popular'. Spkrs. incl. Karl Francis, G.F. Newman, Diverse Reports, 20-20 Vision, Amber Films. Sessions on 'Radical Alternatives' & S4C. **Details: Chapter Film Workshop 0222 396061.**

MON 8 APR

ISLINGTON Coach to **Molesworth** 9.45am Islington Town Hall. Returns 6pm approx. Tickets £4/£2.50 UB40. Bring bells and pennants to ring base at 2pm. **Bking: Islington CND 01-609 1566.**

HORNSEY Coach to Nat. Demo. at **Molesworth** leaves Hornsey Library at 10am. **Tickets £4/£2.50 UB40 from Barbara, Hornsey CND 01-340 3977.**

FRI 12 APR

LONDON Concert for Central America 7pm, Central Hall, Westminster. Featuring: Luis Mejia Godoy (Nicaragua), Amparo Ochoa (Mexico), Grupo Experimental (Costa Rica). **Tickets: £6.50, £5.50, £4 from 29 Islington Park St, N1. Details: Duncan Green 01-359 6235/359 3976, Amanda Goodall 01-359 8982.**

BIRMINGHAM 'Consensus or Confrontation: New styles in Local Government'. Re-union and study wkend org. by Fircroft Guild at Fircroft College, Selly Oak, Birmingham 19. **Details: Stan Todd, Bryn Aderyn, Penygarn, Pontypool, Gwent.**

SAT 13 APR

LONDON Labour Cttee. on Ireland Social. Live Irish music, poetry. 8pm Calthorpe Arms, Calthorpe St, EC1 (5 mins, Kings X). Adm. £1.50/50p UB40.

COUNTRYWIDE Protest against McDonald's and other burger places. Contact London Greenpeace, 6 Endsleigh St, WC1.

SUN 14 APR

LONDON Labour Cttee. on Ireland AGM 10am County Hall, SE1. Spkrs, incl. Clare Short MP, Christine Crawley MEP on 'The Strategy for British withdrawal'. John McDonnell (Dep. Leader GLC), Dr Maire O'Shea on 'Irish in Britain'. Disabled access, creche. Open to all Labour Party supporters.

FORTHCOMING

19 APR LONDON 'Poverty — a crisis for babies' Maternity Alliance Conf. Royal College of Obstetricians, 27 Sussex Pl, NW1. **Apply to Sue Hunt, Maternity Alliance, 59-61 Camden High St, NW1 7JL.**

21 APR LEEDS 'Jewish Perspectives on Nuclear Arms' Nat. JONAH (Jews Organised for a Nuclear Arms Halt) Seminar 9.30am-5pm. Adult Education Centre, Springfield Mount, Leeds 2. (Part of Univ. campus). Workshops, vegetarian lunch, creche. Adm. £8/£4 UB40. **Details: JONAH, 14 North Park Grove, Leeds 8.**

26 APRIL MOLESWORTH Peace Camp. Cycle rides from all over Britain will converge on USAF Molesworth. SE Ride starts in London on 22nd Apr with full back-up. (Money raised is for OXFAM & Campaign Against Arms Trade.) **Details: Ride for Life, c/o Brixton Cycles, 433 Coldharbour La, SW9 01-671 1965/733 6055.**

27 APRIL LONDON Preparation Meeting for UN Conf. on Women Nairobi 1985. 1-6pm Tolmers Sq Community Centre, Foundry Mews, NW1. Women only. Disabled access/creche/refreshments. **Details: King's X Women's Centre, 71 Tonbridge St, WC1. 01-837 7509.**

27 APR JORDANS (Bucks) 'Christian Peacemaking in a divided Europe' 10am-5pm Village Hall. Spkrs. incl. Jan Ter Laak (Pax Christi, Netherlands) on Poland; Peter Jarman (Quakers) on USSR; Stephen Tunnicliffe (Anglican) on Hungary. Registration Fee £4/£1.50 UB40 to **Stephen Tunnicliffe for END, 4 The Square, Clun, Shropshire SY7 8JA. 058-84398.**

11-12 MAY MANCHESTER 55th Annual Gen. Meeting of Socialist Health Assoc. **Details: 01-703 6838/701 4706.**

14 MAY CROYDON CND Meeting on Trident 8pm Ruskin House, 23 Combs Rd. **Details: Croydon CND 01-651 1891.**

18 MAY KEELE Computers in Sociology & Social Studies Teaching. 10.30am-4.30pm Dept. of Education, Uni. of Keele. **Details: Denis Gleeson, Dept. of Education, Uni. of Keele, Staffs. ST5 5BG.**

18 MAY CARLISLE Green Fair — to promote caring attitude to environment *10am-4pm Market Hall, Fisher St.* **Details: Pat Williams Wigton 43190.**

18 MAY LONDON 'Beyond NATO' CND dayschool County Hall, SE1. Spkrs. incl. Bruce Kent, Jonathon Porritt. **Registration: £3/£1 UB40 to Linda Churnside, c/o 11 Goodwin St, N4 by 8th May.**

18 MAY WAKEFIELD 'You can always have another one!' study day for women who have suffered miscarriages, Health Professionals interested in care and counselling, all those interested in this socially taboo subject. 10am-4pm Treacy Hall, adjacent Wakefield Cathedral. Spkrs. incl. Dr. Peter Huntingford (BBC 'Birthright' programme), Dr. Barbara Pickard PhD. **Tickets from Secretary, Miscarriage Assoc, c/o Dolphin Cottage, 4 Ashfield Terrace, Thorpe, Nr. Wakefield. Phone: Leeds 828946.**

29 MAY ALCONBURY to MOLESWORTH E. & S. Midlands regional day of action to defend Molesworth. March from Alconbury to 'gate party' at main contractors' gate. **Details: Nottingham Defend Molesworth Grp, CND, Unit B, 14-18 St. Mary's Gate, Lace Market, Nottingham. 0602 581948.**

1 JUNE GLASGOW 'Youth vs Trident' Demo. Assemble 12 noon George Sq. March off 12.30pm to encircle MoD building. Rally/Exhibition Kelvin Hall. **Details: Scottish Youth CND, 420 Sauchiehall St, Glasgow. 041-331 2878.**

29 JUNE OXFORD Festival for Peace. Tickets £4 in advance (£5.50/£3 UB40 on day). Children free. **Details: Steve Loach Oxford Peace Festival 1985, 12 Southfield Rd. 0865 244961.**

29 JUNE-6 JULY LONDON 'Time on the Thames' non-residential summer sch. org. by WEA/London Univ. Extra Mural Dept./London History Workshop. Choice of 4 topics: Sexual Politics, Hopes & Fears, Popular Culture, London's Suburbia. **Details: Frank Carr, WEA, 32 Tavistock Sq., WC1. 01-387 9966.**

30 JUNE NOTTINGHAM 'Welfare not Warfare' Picnic at RAF Newton — 500-bed contingency hospital for USAF. **Details: Peace Action Network, CND, Unit B, 14-18 St. Mary's Gate, Lace Market, Nottingham 0602 581948.**

Sorry, but we can't accept entries over the phone. Entries must be received by Friday preceding issue date. We reserve the right to exclude items without giving reasons and are not responsible for errors. Space is strictly limited so if you definitely want your item to appear, we suggest you book it as an ad under the appropriate classified heading. See main heading for rates, etc.

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MEETINGS

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Public Talk Sunday 7 April 8 p.m. 'Soul Initiation'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

FINANCIAL

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GRADUATE JAT SIKH (female), seeks graduate Jat Sikh (male) under 30, for temporary match, to meet family requirements only. Confidentiality guaranteed. Serious replies only. Box (14)0570.

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MALE GRADUATE linguist, young 50, living in Peterborough area, interested in almost everything except party politics — non-smoker, anxious to meet slim, intelligent woman with sense of humour, 35/45, and not too many hang-ups. Photo welcomed. Box (12)0501.

SINGLE, PROFESSIONAL woman, 32, tall, slim, solvent, seeks intelligent male company, for dining out, theatre etc. In Manchester. Photo please. Box (14)0579.

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SLIGHTLY DEMORALISED revolutionary socialist male, 28, small, slim, attractive, interests: cinema, reading, music, games, seeks female lover for affectionate, sensual, possibly long-term relationship. London. Box (14)0585.

******* SINGLE GENTLEMAN,** 36, slim, 6' 3", intellectual, conservative (*not* wealthy), seeks tall, high-calibre, woman graduate for marriage & happy family life. Edinburgh/anywhere. Box (14)0589.

TALL, ATTRACTIVE-ISH, male, 32, into humour, cycling, walking, cinema, theatre, seeks female with any of similar interests. Non-smoking. West Yorkshire. Please reply someone. Box (14)0575.

TALL, CARING, unattached male historian, 40, slim, blue eyes, likes bright lights of town and tranquility of countryside, seeks attractive female graduate, 30-40, with varied cultural interests, for exciting, rewarding relationship. London. Box (14)0571.

VERY ATTRACTIVE, socialist, heterosexual woman, 35, seeks new friends m/f., interests include: theatre, music, wining and dining, cinema, trade unionism, politics, travel. Lives London. Box (14)0574.

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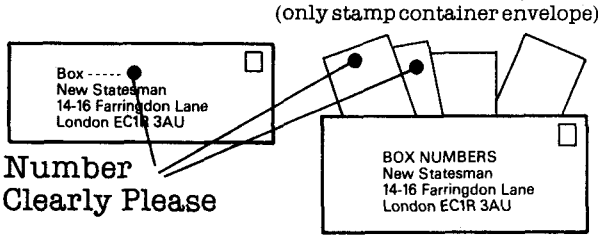

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They'd be a lot higher if he didn't mention his disability.

Because he'll be lucky to get an interview once that's on his application form.

One man that we know of had 50 job applications rejected in a row.

Until he didn't mention his disability.

He then received 12 interviews out of the next 35 applications.

Yet even if the disabled get an interview, a lot of the time is taken asking how they'd cope.

They'll be asked in great detail how they'd get to work if they had a puncture. Or how they'd be able to reach a particular filing system. (No thought is given to locating the filing system in a different place.)

But with 3½ million able-bodied to choose from, why should you as an employer consider someone with a disability?

Firstly, many disabilities don't affect a person's ability to do the job.

An artificial leg is no barrier to being a draughtsman. Nor is deafness a handicap to programming a computer.

What's more, it's been found that people with disabilities actually take less time off through illness.

Simply because they're glad to be given a job.

And their disability often means that they're able to use their other senses more efficiently.

For example, the blind can have a more developed sense of touch or hearing. So for some jobs they might actually be better equipped.

Admittedly, it might cost you a small investment to accommodate them, but Government funding is available through the Manpower Services Commission.

And you could be breaking the law if you don't employ them.

Because if you have over 20 people in your company then 3% of your workforce should be disabled.

Not that the law alone is powerful enough to overcome prejudice.

Which is why the GLC has set up the Disability Resource Team.

To encourage employers to operate an equal opportunities policy.

To give advice to the disabled themselves. As well as to other members of the community in positions of power.

Because even if disabled people are able to get a job, their problems are far from over.

The simplest of journeys is a major expedition. They're labelled fire risks in theatres and cinemas. Seen as obstacles in pubs and restaurants. Or restricted to off-peak hours in swimming pools.

Virtually imprisoning them in their own homes.

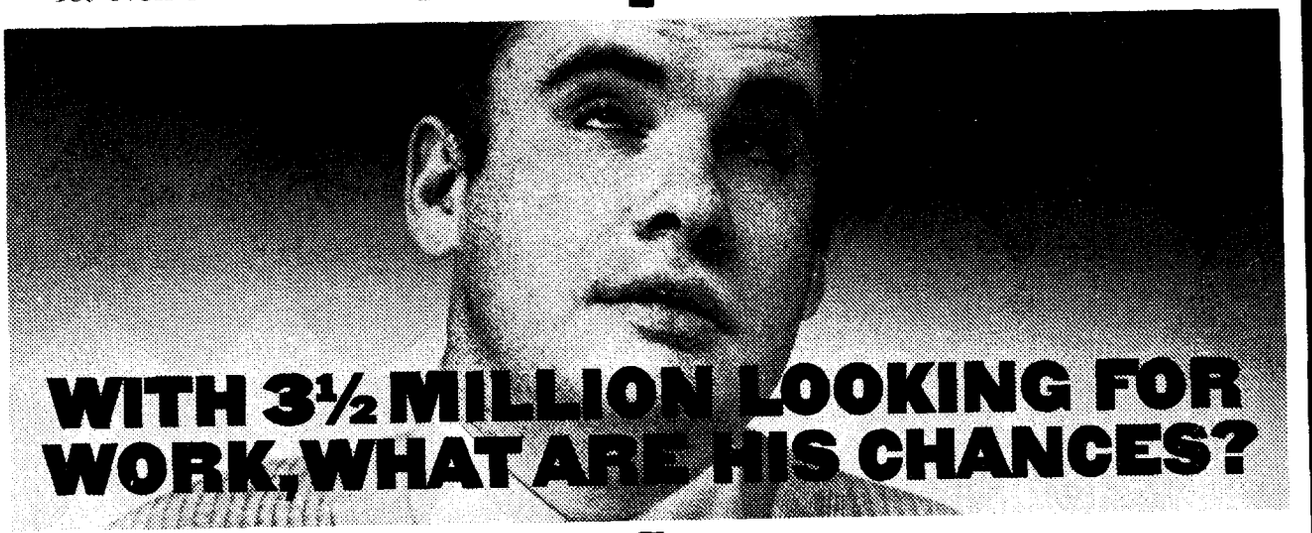
If you're an employer do give some consideration to employing the disabled. Or if you'd like advice write for our leaflet to GLC Disability Resource Team, Room 92, The County Hall, London SE1 7PB. Or telephone the GLC Hotline on 01-633 4400.

We'd also welcome enquiries from people with disabilities. We're not able to solve individual cases but we can give guidance.

If you do consider a disabled person for a job you'll sleep well at nights.

Not because you've been charitable.

But because you've made a wise business decision.



WITH 3½ MILLION LOOKING FOR WORK, WHAT ARE HIS CHANCES?

GLC. A DISABILITY SHOULDN'T BE A HANDICAP.

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